

INFANS AMORIS

T. EVERETT HARRY



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INFANS AMORIS

THE TALE OF A ONCE SORROWFUL SOUL

A Romance

BY
T. ^{Thomas} EVERETT HARRY

"And I shall send Mine angels before My face with a
great trumpet . . ."

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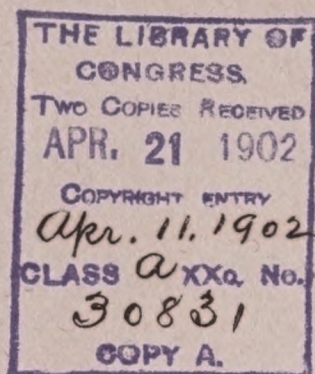
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TO
PRIESTS, SINNERS,
AND
ALL THOSE THAT ARE IN DARKNESS.

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INFANS AMORIS.

PROLOGUE.

I, WHO speak, am one gone and forgotten. I am one who is in Glory and Joy. I am one who sinned and was forgiven. I know the penalty of sin, the acute agony of Regret, and the inexpressible tortures of Remembrance. I, who write, am one who knows—knows the glories of Heaven and the tortures of hell. I am one who was in the flesh when Christ was born,—who sinned, and was forgiven by Him. I speak in the idioms of the English language; I express myself in English, though Hebrew was once my tongue.

I speak as from out a tomb, as one dead and gone. I am what the world calls dead—my body has lain for many a hundred year rotten in the ground. Yet I live! Live you will ask, how can I live if I died? One will say, “Absurd! If you are dead, you are dead. ‘Death is the end of all.’”

Vociferously I answer them:

No; death is not the end. What we term “death” is only a form of speech meaning the Soul leaving the body to enter into real Life—a Life of Glory or a Life of Grief. There is a Beyond—a beyond to be pre-

pared for in fervent prayer and expectant trembling. Ah, it would be a grand thing for some if death were the end of all—what a self-made Fate for the damned would be obviated! But, joyfully for the good, sadly for the bad, there is a Life after death,—“Death” is not the end; the soul cannot be annihilated. Could one realize what a hideous and odious thing sin is, what it caused Christ to suffer in the Garden, when a sweat of blood oozed from His pure pores, he would realize that for sin no punishment could be too rigorous almost. Could one know the transporting, transcendent bliss of Heaven, the supreme joy of the God-love, he would truly say: For such a Reward no work is too hard, no humiliation too bitter.

I, who give this to the Sad Planet, am one, as I said, who lived in the flesh when Christ was born. I saw Him as a babe,—I saw Him die. It is by His love that I am where I am—in Heaven. Of Heaven—I know the glories thereof. O, I know the ecstatic and rapturous delight of the Just,—in being in the Creator’s vision,—in being bathed in His fountain of inexhaustible, magnanimous Love,—in hearing the sweet, mellifluous song of the angels,—and in seeing the glory of Light, the beauty and sublimity of Re-creation. And knowing this, knowing what I once did—what made the God-Man weep—I cry:

O God, Thou art a God of mercy, and Thy mercy endureth forever—to spheres and lives that are now, and to spheres and lives yet to come. Thou lovest man, and man loveth Thee not. Thou hast, in Thine exceeding Love, sent Thine own Part—Christ—to

earth,—to be born to cold and snow,—to sorrow and be wronged—ultimately to die.

Of Him will I speak, of His Love as a Child,—for He is to the world a Child always—*INFANS AMORIS*. It was He who gave the world a second birth, a cleansing; He gave to man a new Law, an easy Law, a holy Law—and this Law is just. I speak in knowing, for having experienced and seen, I know. For my sin was terrible; I darkly stained my soul. But for every gesture of sinful joy, for every kiss, for every evil word I paid a pang of torture. The joys which I depict relating to Jardac and me were sinful;—did I not pay a penalty? Who will say that the punishment due to sin is not hard, not just. Yet Sin itself makes its own sequent punishment. “By your words will ye be condemned,” says Christ. And it is our evil works that condemn us.

I sinned. It was the Infant of Love who pitied me, who forgave me. I am, and was, a living witness of His mercy. Hence I come from Him to tell of it, in simple love. Yes, of His Love and of His Mercy will I tell,—and how that Love and Mercy were wounded when He saw the world To-day. And if my life of example, my telling of His love, my warning, do any good, He will be pleased—and His pleasure is my joy. He is Love:—Repenting, no sin will He refuse pardon; loving, He will love in return; rejecting, He will also do the same. But woe betide him who knows the Law and casts it aside....“it were better for him had he never been born.” For the New Law is easy, merciful, and just. No excuse will be of any avail if it is re-

jected. Moses and the prophets had a hard Law, a strong Law; by it the sinner, even on earth, was punished severely. But the Law of Love is easily fulfilled; the Reward of its fulfillment is munificently rich.

In this tale I speak plainly, extenuating no sin. I tell the facts, the joys—the punishment following,—a proof of God's self-working Law of Justice, of Christ's Love, . . . of a Mother's Love.

I am a Spirit. Many doubt the ability of spirits coming to earth. Of these narrow-minded agnostics, I say: " ' If they hear not Moses and the prophets (in the New Law, Jesus and the Priests) neither will they believe if one rise again from the dead.' *Requiescat in pace.*" And if such as these should see me as I spiritually am, they would declare me to be of scientific composition, able to be solved by Science.

It seems so strange that some people will pin their faith, rejecting Religion and denying miracles, on that fruit of a sickly and finite brain—Atheistical Science: the science of an egotistical professor, who, in his atheism, denies the existence of God. Ask this all-wise professor to solve the mystery of Creation; ask him who made the world, what it was made of. He will either answer, "From an Atom," or, "From Nothing!" Now if it be from an Atom, ask him where the first Atom came from. If he says "From Nothing," ask him to form a dollar from vacuous space; tell him that "nothing from nothing leaves nothing." * No

* NOTE.—Brief note may here be made of the "latest" theoretical fad of the pseudo-scientists, called the "Corpuscular Theory."

doubt the present professor is very wise, very well informed in recondite learning, very positive, sure;—but, ah, how inferior is this latter-day production to the old Grecian philosophers!—he is not so well informed of “atoms” as Democritus was—and even Democritus believed in the soul; and even the abstruse atomic theories of Democritus are not so true as the theory of Heracleitus—but, gracious, what has old, primitive Heracleitus to do with the advanced pedant of to-day! But if men are so advanced as to deny the tremendous forces that surround and control the earth—forces that are terrific, potent, limitless, either good or bad, I can only say, “Rest in peace”—for the day is at hand when the peace of the unbelieving and evil shall be dispelled, and the powers that control men’s destinies shall be revealed. And though to all mortal souls I, as *Horatio* said to dying *Hamlet*, say

The “theory” is that the beginning of material was not an atom, but one thousand minute corpuscles revolving around a central one, forming the “Atom.” This class of persons consists of wise men who claim that two nothings make something, and they are quite jubilant over this, their latest discovery, for it seems to solve the question how the physical elements of matter which made the others, are accounted for, the original elements being, as they claim, about seventy.

Truly—

“Man wants but little here below.

But the question may be put as how these infinitesimal elements formed themselves into stupendous worlds. As well divide an apple and say the whole apple came from that one division. Just let us gaze at a crowd of men, at a sylvan forest, at a falling cascade, at a pure white lily, and ask ourselves, Is it not easier to believe in an infinite God of Love, who created these, than in an infinite nothingness?

AUTHOR.

“Flights of angels sing thee to thy rest,”

it is probable that flights of devils will sing some to unrest,—for as men form their lives, so shall they form their After. But in spite of pedants, for my part, I cannot see any logical theory why man could advance against the belief in spirits and miracles when he has almost incredible facts demonstrated and made known to him; as, the freezing of water over a flame, the boiling of water on ice, and photographs being taken through the human body, proving that things which seemingly do not exist really exist, that light is all-penetrative, and is as great a factor of creation as material. And though the present Churches are antagonized to Science, because Science cannot be reconciled to some parts of the Old Testament, I say that Science is beginning to declare the Truth,—and some of its manifestations prove that miracles are scientific facts,—and the day is coming when, in spite of its drawbacks in the forms of misinformed “professors,” it will show the proof of Spirit over Material, and the surrounding world of souls will be seen, and the puerile atomic theories of creation will dissolve in Light.

Spiritualism is compatible to the great Laws of Nature. Hence I say: The earth and all planets spring from the ever-loving Intelligence and Fancy of the Creator;—is the loving Creator’s Fancy and Intelligence nothing? Blasphemy it is to say so. Now, as God is real, so also spirituality is real. Mortals cannot see God though He is real. Hence it is absurd to deny the existence of spirits because man’s finite eyes cannot perceive them. And it is as

easy for a spirit to float around the earth, as it is for man to do so on "flying machines" and balloons,—and it is easier for a spirit to float in air than for the material body of man to ascend. If I am a spirit, one will ask, how is it that I can write or speak. For this errand of love, I have as in a whirlwind come down from God's Sphere to Earth. Being on the earth, I enter an animal—a beast of God's creation; I enter and inhabit the body of a beast that Man scorns. I am here for a little while, then I shall again depart. Though I am here, the glory of God encompasses me—for His Love is everywhere. I will speak to sinners from whom there is hope. I wish to speak (or write) so as to tell that no sin is beyond pardon, provided the sinner sincerely repent; that God is God of all, not of one sect or church; that Sin punishes itself, and that it alone makes man's misery; that God is ready to forgive the most heinous sins, provided there is repentance; that God is a God of Love, pitying and sorrowing for a mortal's misery, and is ready to remove the misery, all that is necessary being the mortal's coöperation. My life which I give is a proof and example of this; my sins were horrible, my grief miserable; I followed Satan and left God;—yet repentance gave me Hope, and I got to Heaven. Hence I sound the Trumpet of Truth, in warning the world, speaking as one who knows, as a mortal that knows men, having lived and sinned as man, as a spirit that speaks no lie, loving God, being with Him in Heaven. And proclaiming Truth, I sound the Tocsin of Doom—Doom which the world is bringing upon itself! Doom

which is at present written in meaning characters of flame in the heavens, which sounds with awesome solemnity in the air, which rumbles and roars in the innermost bowels and corners of the Earth....As an angel I come, am sent in Love, to write and proclaim His Love, His Mercy,—I having experienced it,—and to warn the Sad Sphere of its imminent doom. I give the warning—tell the greatest evil, and how it may be remedied. And if the Evil is not counteracted, and God reborn, then the Doom will fall. Seeing Christ in His mortal life, I know how He grieves for the world's coming sins; being on earth now, I see the cause of His worry and grief. As I sought His life, so men now seek His life and take it by killing Him in others' hearts—and these vile degenerates of good, satellites of Satan, are worse than I, since they do it for GOLD. Needless it is to say who this class of men are. They cover the world, and in the guise of faith they destroy it. And in my narrative I warn the sheep, knowing how and why to warn them—in the boundless love of God. I am a Spirit, and hence speak not worldly; I speak spiritually to those who will hear me. Now for him, who, seeing me unburdened by flesh, exclaims: "She whom I saw, fiery, phantom-like, and diaphanous, is a combination of fluids or drugs, or else she is the fumes of a dead body acting scientifically on the atoms of material and color in the air....Only a phenomenon,"—and so saying, sinks back in his chair and smokes a cigar, feeling satisfied at his astute perspicuity;—for him there is little hope; to him my task is vain. But is he not one

of our educated Twentieth-Century egotists? Yes; and he is also well "educated." There is where the trouble comes in. Egotism is his virtue. "As though an unseen world existed!" says he, incredulously. "There can be no such things. It would be *too* horrible!"—with a shiver. And who will doubt his authenticity or veracity? Was he not educated at Yale, Harvard, or Oxford? Is he not wealthy and "got money to burn?" Are not all the fair damsels "stuck on him?" and do they not affectionately, demurely, with a smack of the lips, apostrophize him as a "bird?" He is "lionized;" he is interested in science—invariably the muddled science of positivists, the science that holds aloof from true Spiritualism. He is interested also in politics, philanthropy, and religion! *Religion?* Certainly he is interested in religion:—Does he not (methodically, if at all, for propriety's sake) attend "church" once or twice a year? Does he not scribble his name—MR. So-and-So—in the donation lists? Mark the *Mr.!* . . . Does he not listen to the "sermon" with his eyes closed—in *humility* (?) Is he not religious, even though he denies spiritually, and sometimes the existence of God Himself? Most undoubtedly he is religious—with Twentieth-Century sectarian religion. He being this, a veritable king—(of the meat market, or gold market, or wheat market, or any market,)—he being, outside of his kingship, an "educated young man," a "lady-killer," a charitable citizen, a loyal servitor of the King, or a staunch upholder of M—— in the presidential campaign—is an authentic, infallible oracle. He

is this? . . . Yes. Then who will doubt him? Who would be so churlish as to contradict him? . . . Why no one, *assuredly*.

The society "queen" and *demi-monde* I do not expect to accept my narrative. Neither do I expect the society brute and dandy, nor the up-to-date scientific professor to accept the moral and lesson of my tale. These people *will not* believe. Could they do so, could they see what things occur unseen by mortal eyes, the terror and grandeur of the knowledge would drive them all to either monasteries and nunneries or lunatic asylums; . . . their weak and sickly Brain could not bear the true, scientific Truth. Lowell, even, did not dream of what a truth he hit at when he wrote the following extract from "A Glance Behind the Curtain: "

" We see but half the causes of our deeds,
Seeking them wholly in the outer life,
And heedless of the *encircling spirit-world*
Which, *though unseen*, is *felt* and sows in us
All germs of pure and world-wide purposes."

Furthermore, the demons in hell believe in God, in spirituality. Man alone does not. Yet the demons are worse than Man! . . . Why? "Because they (or Satan alone,) tempt Man," is Man's ready answer. If they tempt Man, they do not make Man commit the sin: Man does it of his own unrestrained volition. The Devil suggests, Man acts;—which is the worse? . . . The devils, according to the legend, committed but one sin and were cast into Hell;—how many sins does not Man go on committing? . . .

O Egotist, realize thy baseness and worthlessness. Harken to the Christ Child; obey His Law. Repent, and repenting, sing:

“I am sorry for my sins, O God....forgive! And glory be to Thee....Mayst Thou be forever praised by the Thrones, the Cherubim, and the Seraphim; mayst Thou be forever adored by the Powers, the Virtues, and the Dominations; mayst Thou be forever obeyed by the Angels, the Archangels, and the Principalities! May the planetary circles of fiery and living beauty forever give thanks to Thee! May the stars forever form a silent anthem; and may all birds of song be unceasing in their carols! May Thy Love and Power last forever; and when that Love and Power shall fail, may the angels sin and fall into hell,—may the heavens disappear, may clouds of darkness and trembling descend into hell and carry Satan up, supreme,—may Satan have our souls;....may all this happen when Thou shalt cease to love—but thanks be to Thee, *for that shall never be!*.... Forgive, Forgive! O Christ forgive me!”

Thus singing from the heart and repenting, thou shalt be forgiven, and Christ will be to thee, as He was to me, and is to all sinners who implicitly place their trust in Him, a Child of Mercy and

INFANS AMORIS.

CHAPTER I.

“WHAT MADE THE ANGELS WEEP.”

HARK! hear ye the ripple of gurgling water? Hear its quaint song of mellifluous ripple-ripple. Hear how melodiously, like a sweet, unceasing song, it falls over rocks imbedded in a frondage of fern—gurgle, gurgle, gurgle! What a dream of meditation!—what a vast area for conundrums is expanded in this aqueous element! What a proof of the Divine Creator’s all-sufficing Love and Concern for Man! What an unmarred symphony, played not by the visible hand of Man, but by the Supreme Intelligence of God. What music is more harmonious than the music of Nature?—Nature not defiled by the hand of Man! What sublime emotions do we not experience when we analyze the glories of Nature: the meaning of the murmuring brook, the song of the birds, the wistful wail of the winds, the howling of a storm, the beauty of a flower, the green of the meadows,—all which form a perfect Symphony of Accord, as the planets form a Symphony, though to men mute, by treading their fixed paths respectively;—and who will solve the Enigma of the Stars?

Did I hear the song of a bird?—or was it the dulcet tone of Jardac’s voice—the voice which held for me the music of Paradise? No, it could not have been

the voice of Jardac, for I had my eyes set on his face and his lips had not moved. *Fool!* fool that I was, that *he* was all in all to me;—he was the center of my admiration and love. All my faculties were employed for his pleasures—*his*; my King.

When I contemplate on those days of folly, I grow almost sad. Oh, who will measure the follies done in earth's evanescent passion, miscalled “love?” Who will count the numberless infidelities practiced by wives? Who will tell of the damaged names and ruined honors? Who will expatiate on the grief of the progeny who inherit a crown of derision and shame? Ah, I fain that I were able to impress upon the minds of many that but one in a hundred truly loves—loves with Heaven's love, Heaven's greatest gift. Truly 'tis a boon, not to be lightly spoken of, the boon of true love. Earthly “love” is a chimerical and fugacious passion which rises like a flame and dies away, leaving the body shivering and smoldering in pain, makes the soul a lifeless ember; which rises at the sight of a beautiful face and form—this is called by the sacred name of Love. Blasphemy to call this corporal attraction by the profound name of *Love*—a name which is the appellation of one of God's great attributes. Thus we can see that true Love is a gift from God, a boon from Heaven, predestined for any two souls from their beginning, forming the Affinity. When this true Love is led by earthliness astray a gross sacrilege is done—a Sacrilege as there is none other.

I lay in Jardac's arms—a new thing for me. I

was dead to heavenly truths and things ; I was earthly, though not licentious and sinful. I did my duties to God methodically and without heart,—I was lukewarm. I loved Jardac more than anything on the earth or out of the earth. No words of love had as yet been spoken, though I instinctively felt he loved me. *He loved me?* LOVED ME? Why, certainly he loved me! Did he not travel a long distance every evening to see me, (under pretense of also visiting my mother!) Did he not load me with fruits and flowers!—And after this eve....did he not tell me and show me that he *loved* me? *Do not ask.* He did love me,—as all men love,—as all men love their paramours and victims, and then desert them, caring naught for the soul stained. Is this not natural? Is he doing no wrong? Is it not unnatural and wrong that Man is bestial base, low, and degraded? Is not degradation his native element? He seems at least to tell one so, for “actions speak louder than words.” Is not meanness natural to him? Is not passion—“ripping fun”—his god? Consequently does he not seem to be true to his native gifts—if his native gifts be meanness, sycophancy, and sensuality? If his native destiny is to be good, holy, and uprighteous, he, either erroneously or maliciously, is gravely going astray. Yet in spite of all, he is “the highest ‘creature’ of creation;” the beast is a beast, HE IS A MAN. He has a soul and stains it, the beast has none; he flings insults and blasphemies up to the Throne on High, the beast does not; he, who was created to glorify God, does not glorify God; the beast, created for the use of Man, unconsciously glori-

fies God. Which is the superior? . . . Man, devoid of Soul, full of sin, is lower than the sinless beast.

On the eve of which I write, the moon was full; she shed her mellow, fulgent radiance lavishly;—all objects open to her rays were clearly visible. In the distance I could see the gold-spiked dome of the Temple and the beautiful “Solomon’s Gate.” The gold and jeweled ornamentation sparkled and scintillated like living flame—it formed a magnificent spectacle; its huge dome rose heavenward, the gold spikes appearing like so many stationary stars. The jeweled figures of iridescent grandeur were sanctifying in their significant import. The heavens were ablaze with thousands of twinkling stars, which to my imaginative fancy was a sabaoth of fire;—they formed various figures—figures which I in love’s illusion conceived.

This was an evening in which one could dream of love, sanctifying, beautiful, and fair. I lay in Jardac’s arms—strong, muscular arms. The scent of the fragrant aloe trees permeated the air; the pure, little white myrtle flowers seemed like a myriad of stars on a sky of shining evergreen; the rippling song of a bird vibrated in the fragrant air—a sweet, liquid melody, an inspiring, heart-whole song. The noise of the traffic in the City was becoming subdued, as the hour of eleven was nigh. The moon slowly sailed along in her unobstructed path; she seemed like some lost soul—wanting, waiting. Was it any wonder if Luna was sad when she saw the crimes perpetrated on this dark sphere under the cover of darkness? Did I then think of this? Ah, no!—Jardac took my soft hands, tenderly

drew me closer to himself—no wonder! I was maidenly fair, delicately well-formed, and voluptuously beautiful. My body was sylph-like and pliant in form, white and flawless; my face was minion, oval, and sweet; my eyes were limpid blue; my hair was of a golden hue; my cheeks were rosy and dimpled. Was I not worth winning? I was a virgin;—I had never before loved. But I was as most women. I was taught the Jewish Law; I obeyed it—obeyed it because others also did. I indulged in no sinful pleasures; I knew not the real horror of sin. I knew the Scriptures,—I respected and revered the memory of the holy men spoken of, though I felt no love for them. Had I been reared indifferently? you will ask. I had not; I had been reared methodically. My mother was almost a religious fanatic; she spent most of her time in prayer. Because she was thus she thought that I naturally would be the same, and she took no pains to impress the facts upon my mind.

“Nathana love, hearken to me: I have known thee for a year; six seasons have passed since I met thee. I have been a welcome visitor at thy father’s house, though he being away, I see him but seldom. Thy mother thinketh me a pious Jew. Nathana, precious gem, I have often been with thee alone;—thy mother trusteth me; canst not thou also trust me?” thus spake my lover, though never before had he spoken so tenderly to me.

I gazed up to his magnificent countenance! Ah, he was a beautiful man! Dark complexioned and master-

ful was he, though his physiognomy betrayed sensuality—but I did not see that then.

“Trust thee, Jardac?—Why should I not trust thee? I have always done so,” I responded.

“Ah, Nathana,” he cunningly said, “sometimes doubts assail me. Thou dost oft-times lay in mine arms. Thou perhaps dost not dream of what I will tell thee,—but do not think me bold. The beasts love me, the cur comes, grovels and casts himself at my feet, the doves fly about my head—all loving me.... Why shouldst not thou also love me? . . .”

Why should I not love him?—I had always loved him. When I first saw him I was irresistibly, singularly attracted towards him. Ah, evidently he did not know. Why—his very glance was a thrust of rapture, his every gesture was dear to me,—and his voice I drank in like wine.

“I do love thee,” I impetuously cried; and I, in abandonment of self, flung my naked, white, velvety arms around his lion-like neck.

A smile of expansive, complacent satisfaction rippled over his kingly and majestic face. He, with a dexterous movement, lifted my supple form,....with a gliding motion arose, held me to him—kissed my upturned face!....Ah! what a sweet realization of heaven on earth!....what a crown of unequaled glory! No queen on a throne of gold, on a daïs of jasper and diamonds, could have been so happy, so joyous! The intoxicating and thrilling rapture that surged through my being caused me to tremble....What a delicious taste to my soul were those red, luscious lips! what

a deliriously maddening sensation akin to pain twinged from my feet to the roots of my hair when he convulsively clasped me to him! . . . What a thrill, so like an electric current, circuited through us, binding us One. Oh, oh . . . the stars in the cerulean roof on high danced before my startled vision, the pale moon seemed making a direct course to me—Would it come and crush us—not *us*, but *him*? . . . Oh, no, no! Did I hear a seraphic sound—the sound of an angel's singing? . . . Did I hear a demoniacal grin—a snicker of fiendish triumph subdued? . . . Were demons near to harm him? . . . I fearfully clasped him closer to me. Silence enveloped us, save the gurgling of distant water. For two minutes we stood thus: Those two minutes were in heaven. My heart throbbed close to his, tempestuously; my blood seemed as a stream of burning lava.—Did the moon give a sadly satirical smile? I jerked myself from Jardac, rubbed my eyes. Had I been dreaming? . . .

Reality now seemed to encompass me;—one minute ago I had been in a dream—the effects were upon me still. I retreated from him and blushed with maiden bashfulness. Had I been unladylike? bold? No; for he with a stride was again by my side; . . . in a moment his arms encircled me. He hastily whispered:

“Come! come! follow me; I will lead thee where no one will interrupt our dream.”

And he tried to lead me away. I hesitated.

The leaves of the tamarind tree above us gave forth a plaintive sound.

“Where?” I inquired, dazed.

“To love—to my home,” he replied. And he kissed me,....I grew wild in the warmth of that maddening kiss,....and as his arms encircled me I yielded myself wholly to him. I would go anywhere with him, to thus purely adore him. I went with him, thinking of naught in my excess of joy. On—on—slowly—lovingly....on.

With his arms about me we went—went on a path leading to transporting rapture, sin—ultimately, if followed, to Hell. The tall cedars mournfully and sentimentally bowed as we passed them; a moaning sigh arose among the trees; several dark clouds rolled simultaneously in the heavens, a rattling roar of thunder ensuing. I trembled....I gazed into the air....I thought not of what vast realms of glory unexplored were there; I dreamt not what worlds of unmarred beauty were revolving above. I neither thought nor hazarded a guess concerning the invisible occupants of air and space.

We hurried on—a storm was coming; huge drops of rain began to fall, On,....on,....on we went. Once in awhile we rested, then went on again, he speaking loving words to me. The somber skies grew darker, the pale moon altogether disappeared from view, the stars and planets became utterly obscured; clouds of infernal blackness came rolling along the firmament, changing its quietude into a state of perturbed turmoil. The lightning in livid forks of red flame darted athwart the troublous sky. The rattling of the thunder became incessant. Not a word passed between us. An impressive and foreboding storm was this. Was it

to warn a soul on the brink of perdition? Did this soul receive the warning? . . .

On, on, on! over hard, stony roads; on, out of Jerusalem; on, over green grass, over the flowers of the field; onward we quickly trod, resting as little as we could. I thought not of the home I was leaving; *I was with him*. After we had traveled about two miles, we halted. I gazed at him, then about me. A magnificent building, though somewhat small, rose picturesquely before us. Jardac produced a key from his pocket, inserted it into the curious lock, pressed it—whereupon the huge door flew open. A blaze of cheerful, mellow light welcomingly greeted us. There was the song of birds, . . . the sound of music, . . . and a flash of color.

“Enter!” I heard Jardac imperatively say, and instinctively I entered he after me, across the courtyard.

“This is my home,” he said. “When I came to thy home in the City of Jerusalem, I saw thee and determined to win thee. I detest hastiness. I took my time;—I won thy heart. I love thee. Thy mother thought me a poor shepherd; I am not. This house is about two miles from the Temple. It is very seldom visited; we are free from intrusion. Thou must forgive me for taking thee from thy home so abruptly. Had I asked thee to go with me, explaining all circumstances, thou wouldst undoubtedly have refused;—I know woman’s capricious nature well. I took thee by storm; thou didst in a state of dreaminess follow me. Now here we are to dream a dream of love. Don’t ask me to make thee my wife—I am married, though I care

not for *her*. Nathana, idol of mine adoration, wilt thou not give thyself to me? For before God thou art my true wife; the maudlin ceremony of church-craft cannot bind us tighter.”

I hesitated; but who could resist that tempting glance—that offer? Even were I not his wife, he loved Me,—*he had said so*. I was half stupefied. The bronze chandeliers, the marble statues, the green palms and the jeweled ornaments all commingled together and rushed and whirled in my excited imagination.

“Wilt thou stay with me?” he asked, and seeing my hesitation, he bent and kissed me!—“Wilt thou not be mine, indifferent of extraneous ceremony—mine in love?”

“Yes, I will stay with thee; I will love thee; but,”—as I thought of my mother—“what will my mother say?”—I hesitated.

“She will say nothing; she cares little for thee,” he said; somewhat derisively continuing: “All she cares for is prayer. Thou wast not useful to her, thou canst be so to me—thou canst love me and make me happy. Moses, Abraham, and all the holy men were of use to God;—everyone must be of some use. Nathana,”—his voice sank lower—“wilt thou not be thus useful? The sight of thy face makes me happy, and thou shalt not go unrewarded. Thou wilt not moan for the blessing of Hymen; we will be the slaves of Eros—aye, in a fairyland of fairness, for this place is a fairyland. A grove of fruit and shade trees spread their branches here; a brook of pure crystalline water rushes past; the

scenery is magnificent, and when the sun sets it forms a panorama that is sublime. . . . Come ! ”

As the dulcet tone of his voice died away I went to him,—I followed him. He led me up a wide staircase, up to a room. He opened the door of the room, entered it. I following. It was furnished in Oriental style. The tapestry was rich with golden brocade ; the rugs of tiger skin and Persian wool were gorgeously brilliant. The palms and exotics mingled were somniferous in their influence, and they caused a drowsy sensation to fall over me. Delicious odors were exhaled from unique cassolettes. A rosy haze illumined the apartment. Jardac and I simultaneously sank on a divan, which was covered with the softest cushions. With him thus, I felt as though I were on soft and billowy clouds. And there, I just shut my mind on other thoughts than—love.

“ Love, lay thy head here,”—he by a pantomimic gesture indicated that he wished my head to be on his bosom—“ and gaze into mine eyes. Seest thou not the love which consumes my soul, which causes my heart to beat fiercely, and which causes me to feel as though I were on fire ? The long walk did not tire us ; why ?— Because, Nathana, love was at work strengthening us, making us new beings. Ah, Nathana love, I will love thee forever. When I cease to love thee, may this house crumble to ebon ruins ; when I cease to love thee, may the heavens fall and consume the earth by hot fire ; when I cease to cherish thee, may the Roman Empire in mutability and corruption decay ; when I cease to adulate thee, may this body

of mine become a putrid, rotten thing! See! See! how I love thee!”

He with facile celerity raised me aloof;—I was fragile in form.

“If thou wilt not be mine, to live with me, say so,” he said, “and I will cast thee to the floor and leave thee. If thou hast much to say, if thou love me, say so, and I will cherish thee forever. . . .”

His insidious fierceness of demeanor and sententious speech impressed me most forcibly (as he intended it should). I thought him virile, manly, and brave. For that I exceedingly loved him all the more. His black hair was awry, his dark eyes were aflame, and he trembled:—I thought it was from love, now I know it was the sensual gloating of a victorious and cunning “beast.” I uttered an hysterical shriek of laughter . . . threw myself upon him . . . tenaciously clung there—and he tightly enfolded me in his arms. Did not the Angel Guardians almost weep for a Soul going out of the Path of Rectitude, by delusion and blindness, into the Path of Earthly Enjoyment—perhaps Sin? Would not all the Spirits of Love, Color, Beauty, and Flame have wept—if angels could weep—for my sad plight?

CHAPTER II.

THE SIGN OF HOPE.

“ I WILL be thine, my lord, . . . to worship only thee as my king. See! See how I love thee!” . . . And I wrenched myself from his clasp and cast myself at his feet. I kissed them. I saw his bosom heaving with perfect satisfaction, and he indulgently smiled.

“ She is mine. She loveth me; but who couldn't love *me*?” said he, egotistically to himself; though I then never thought him capable of such a conjectureregarding me; but I now know. Continuing his conjectures:—“ She is innocent; how shall I break that seal? It is a hard task. She thinketh not that I wish her only for amusement! Hum! Hah!I am very wealthy; she knoweth it not. I am one of Cæsar's friends, temporarily visiting here for pleasure; she knoweth it not; she thinketh I love her as she loveth me; I do not. . . .though there is *something*”—he gave a perplexed gesture as his conjectures arrived at this pitch—“ in me that wants her. . . .not as *I* want her; but there seems to be something invisible, intangible, binding us But—bah! I am becoming morbid and morose. I will have my kisses, then see the tragic farewell—then my sojourn here shall be ended.” Aloud he said with a wistful expression, “ Ah, Nathana, thou

hast decided rightly; thou art mine; I am thine. See this festooned room—festooned with an interminable chain of pink roses; see the burning incense—smell it; see the glorious flowers of every hue,—inhale the fragrant and vivifying scent; see the palms of Asia, of Greece, of Egypt! . . . the olive branches of Rome! See the laurel branches—emblem of our victorious and triumphant love;”—nay, he should have said “of our degraded and fallen love,”—“see the cupola-shaped dome, blue, and covered with a thousand miniature golden stars; see the Oriental frescoing and art work, and the Persian silks and satins; see the mosaic floor of fantastic designs, covered with expensive rugs; see the huge, carved table, and on it cool sherbets and the vintage of life, the favorite of Bacchus, the delicacy of the old gods, the glory of the present—Wine! . . . *Whew! Whew!*”—he gave a sharp, shrill whistle, and then . . . music vibrated tunefully through the domes, arches, and halls.—“Hearest thou the divine sound of music? Hear its low and minor sound . . . so like our own low, sweet love.” As he said this, he stooped and lifted me from my humble position at his feet. He raised me, half-carried, half-dragged me to a long, wide divan, which was covered with cushions of Persian design, rugs of Asia, and costly fabrics from Rome. This divan was in an alcove; at its back rose huge, aromatic plants in the air, and over it they spread their giant leaves, indicative of a roof. Two Turkish stands stood by the divan; on one were several bottles of choice orange-colored wine and small glasses; on the other was an

Egyptian pot in which incense was slowly smoldering. He laid me on the divan . . . and sank beside me, holding my soft little hands. He then drew a thick portiere, which hung from the ceiling, together. A rosy haze of light came through the narrow aperture of the curtains. What a dream, . . . what an Aladdin's palace! I felt indolent, amorous, drowsy, and happy; . . . a delicious, inexplicable sensation subtly crept over me. The unseen musicians were discoursing a lively, rollicking melody, and ever and anon there would come the sound of timbrels.

“Nathana,” he said, “is this not a dream? . . . the night steadily rolls on! . . . the stars one by one disappear! . . . the pale moon is hid! . . . the storm ceases! the sun sends his shafts of gorgeous crimson, pink, and saffron up into the sky, . . . the day begins to break, . . . the birds begin to sweetly sing,—what care we? The day will fade, . . . the sun will set, and setting, will cast into the sky the shafts of crimson, chrysoprase, and yellow, a mute yet expressive farewell, . . . the night in darkness will fall! . . . troublous clouds will roll in the horizon! . . . the moon will sail and die! . . . the stars will twinkle,—yet here we will be. The time will roll on; the seasons will come and go, . . . the trees will send forth their shoots, they will blossom and give fruit, . . . the frugiferous harvest will be reaped, . . . the birds will fly away, . . . the Roman Empire will fall and crumble into moldering ruins! . . . the world will disappear—where shall we be? We will forever *sinfully* love! and when our time on this earth is over, *we shall go into fire and dark-*

ness! Why should we not? Nathana, see the consuming fiery flames of hell:—see the black imps leering and malignantly laughing at our grief!—see thy mother in heaven wailing for us!—see thy God pitying us!”

At this graphic and vivid picture, I uttered a shriek of sheer despair; I tore from his clasp; I jumped from the divan.

“I see,” I cried despairingly, “I see! I see thou knowest that we are sinning and we shall go to hell. I see what a horrible deed we anticipate! I did not think,—*now I see*. I left my mother, I left my father’s house; I came with thee to be a concubine—though God knoweth I dreamt of no such thing till now! I must go ere ’tis too late. It is not too late now—now, is it?” And so saying, I eagerly cast at him a glance of pitiful appeal. “In the name of Jehovah, answer me!”

“Yes, Nathana,” he said, and his tone of voice indicated inward satisfaction and triumph,—“it is too late;”—I gave forth a shriek of despair—“thou knowest not,” he went on, “what time it is. Till thou wouldst reach thy home the sun would be well-nigh risen, and then thy mother would say, ‘Speak! where wast thou last night?’ What evasive answer couldst thou give? Wouldst thou lie to her? Wert thou to tell her that thou wast with me all night, she would have thee stoned for fornication, even wert thou innocent, for she would not believe thee. Thou hast loved me, the man of a wife. Now why wouldst thou leave me?”

I gave him a glance of incredulous amazement. I felt miserable, unhappy, yet despite all, I felt glad that I could not return.

“What, Jardac,” I cried, questioningly,—“wouldst thou still have me stay with thee? If so, why didst thou draw that picture?”

He smiled and again kissed my upturned face. Ah, I must have been a picture there. I was clothed in a negligee tunic of thin white muslin, tied by a girdle of soft sky blue. I sank prostrate at his feet. I clasped my hands, . . . raised them heavenward. My blue eyes were wet with hot scalding tears—tears of regret, joy, and grief. My face was lividly pale, my lips tightly compressed. My hair, which held sunbeams in its golden sheen, hung loosely over my shoulders, which were partly bare. I was a picture of meekness, grief, and love.

I did not know, or even think, that Jardac’s reason for drawing that picture was to arouse me, so that I might realize my position and become reconciled to it, so that afterwards, when he offered temptation, I might not then become shamed, scared, and leave. But what woman will perceive the cunning and rodomontades of him by whom she is held, as it were, spell-bound in chains of necromantic fascination!

Did I analyze what he said? No; I unquestioningly accepted his words as indubitable, infallible, and immutable truth, and hence did not question them. Seeing my silence, he reproachfully said:

“Thou didst seem anxious to leave me. Did that picture of my imagination, that ranting talk, that

empty vision scare thee? Did a picture of the punishment we should perchance suffer if we loved, scare thee from remaining with me? Wouldst thou leave me? For weeks have I longed for this, when we—two spirits of madness and love—could lie in each other's caresses drinking in the burning nectar of the joys of love, being consumed by the riotous, unabated fire of passion! O! this is love—the mad kisses, the un sinful sin, the hilarious cries!”—(The seducer!)—“Nathana, I am quixotic, romantic, and have all that money can buy. For my joy a hundred women live, for my kisses a hundred maidens long: they are all ready to answer my call to be my amusement. But thee I truly love—I choose thee, simple girl, thou virginal wanton—And now wilt thou leave me? Dost thou not love me? Dost thy soul not see me as thine own—and dost thou fear the fable of hell?

“For my part, even were that to be our end, I would still love thee—if hell were the end, so truly do I love thee, Nathana. If thou truly dost love me, thou wouldst without regret and hesitancy give up home, father, mother, honor, and God for me; I would do that for thee.” He gazed at me reproachfully, like a deeply wronged animal.

“Yes! yes! I love thee, Jardac,” I cried; “I absolutely love thee; I will give up all for thee; yet I have some regret,”—hesitatingly—“perhaps I really do not love thee as I should.”

“If thou dost not,” said he, “I will teach thee. We will forget all unpleasant things; we shall live, love, and enjoy; bother not to do daily work, there are plenty

of slaves in this miniature palace. Our life shall be one of uninterrupted joy; our days shall be days of pleasure and peace, our nights shall be nights of mad rapture and unceasing love. My love for thee shall never cease; thy love for me shall be my life. For thee have I prepared this gorgeous home—a home that Herod might be proud of;—I have naught to do in life, and hence I do romantic things—as a diversion. I have dreamt of this sweet realization for long; yet true it is, my love, that anticipation is sweeter than realization? So did Herod tell me: When he went to kiss gay Cleopatra—the lips that quaffed the vinegar wherein was dissolved the wondrous pearl—he was in mad joy; when it was over he almost hated the wanton Egyptian queen, and he loved poor Mariamne all the more. Now let me see whether such be true!” And he languorously impressed a rapturous kiss on my lips—“Nay, nay,—realization is sweeter.”

And sitting by him in joy, I dreamt not of how I would pander to the man of whom he so familiarly spoke, Herod—all to regain the love which he said “for thee shall never cease;” I dreamt not of how I would nearly go mad with the impatience of waiting for it, how I would distraughtly wander around the numerous porticos of Herod’s palace, waiting for the innocents of Bethlehem to be slain; how I would pet the doves of Herod’s dove-court, and whisper in their ears, “Get for me my soul’s joy, Jardac;” how I would beseech the aid of evil souls to obtain him again:—I dreamt not of this. I was in joy, aye, in sin,—and I was glad. I ran from God, forsook Him; “for our

nights shall be nights of . . . *unceasing* love." That was sufficient.

"O Jardac," I wantonly cried, encircling his neck with my arms, "how I love thee."

"And what is better than love," said he, "little one? Thou shalt never regret thy love; we shall *love*, revel, and—sin. Start not!—We shall sit by yonder brook and tell of love; we shall pluck flowers and hear their love tales; we shall listen to the birds, and know that our love surpasseth theirs. Love—love, wild, unrestrained, and sweet! Love is the dream of the gods, the imp that brings kings low,—yet love is not known in Rome. Here is love, here with thee and me. We will enjoy all the pleasures of life, all that wealth can buy. Nathana, never let remorse bother thee,—and never speak of regret,—don't let sorrow enter thee,—it is like to a blighting frost on an opening bud.... Lie down. Dream only of love. I will give thee some of this rich wine, which is sweet, mellow, and fine,"—his voice rose into a rich, baritone tune:

"Wine sweet, mellow, yellow wine,
Which is made of fruit of vine,
Which is drank by gods above,
In which we will dream of love;
Which was made by nude Bacchus,
Whose fine form would near shame us,
Who, with ivy and wine pure,
And with jolly old Satur,
Had fine times with sweet Bacchante—
Foom, doom, doomë—ant, ant, ante;"

which forgotten song was, indeed, a favorite at all lascivious balls in those times.

I, obeying his imperative command, laid myself on the cot. Did I give my love to him without regret? Ah, my conscience truly upbraided and burned me. Something in me rebelled and entreated; but I hearkened not; . . . I was happy with him. I forced conscience into quietude; I would enjoy love—even sin—for him. I loved him better than God; I would do anything for him. Had I been taught to truly love my Maker, I might not have fallen. But that “might-have-been,”—has it not a deep and tragic meaning? Ah, I thought, how different was my love from that of my prudish Hebrew friends.

Jardac handed me a glass of wine, I took it, kissed the brim of the glass, and drank it. It was of a delicious flavor, and the sensation following it was exquisitely delightful. . . . He, Jardac, also drank a glass. Several minutes elapsed, then he pulled a knob on the wall. Several minutes again elapsed, then an almost nude slave came, with a thin garment thrown over his arm, and on his other arm was a basket of sweet-scented flowers. After depositing these on one of the stands, he noiselessly, as he had come, left us. Jardac bade me arise. He lifted the diaphanous garment, which the slave had brought, and held it up to view. It was a beautiful thing. The silken, filmy gauze was araneous in texture; the garment was embroidered with golden lace intermingled with small rubies and pearls; and it was scented with some delightful Oriental perfume.—And afterward, when clothed in this diaphanous habiliment of gauzy beauty, I must have been indeed lasciviously charming.

The music still continued, . . . it caused me to thrill with perilous pleasure, . . . the sweet enthralling tune was deliciously transporting. Ah, what a powerful influence has music—it can raise a soul into heaven, or sink it into the dark depths of a hell. The incense smoke rose like a thin spiral thread, scenting the place. Jardac cast and strewed the flowers upon the couch—Ah, how those little things of God's handwork were defiled!—but not so much as our Love was then sacrilegied and defiled and our soul's beauty lessened.

Jardac donned a loose, thin, gorgeous garment of crimson and gold, which had lain on the divan, and then seated himself by me. Ah, what wild words of fluent flattery, amorous love, and thrilling temptation he poured into my ears! How I did implicitly believe him! . . . I heard his words, "This is love;" I felt his burning breath,—I loved it! This was a complete rendition of self.—This was his amusement, his planned pastime—my half-conscious sin.

The wine flowed, . . . the music rang through the apartments, . . . the scent of exotics, plants, and incense blended, permeated the air, . . . the rosy haze became crimson to my dizzy eyes, . . . the frescoping took on hideous shapes, . . . the captive birds sang songs of reproach and derision. . . . I was on fire, . . . I was in deluded rapture, . . . my brain was delirious with joy; my soul was mad in hell. It was a sad, sinful revel of wild kisses, laughs, and cries! . . . God was forgotten, all was forgotten. . . . in this ephemeral madness of enchanting, wanton joy! . . .

I stayed with Jardac five months—five months of

untiring pleasure,—five months of languid, dreamy sleep, perfect joy and rest,—five months very far from Heaven, extremely near to Hell,—five months which would have, had I not seen the INFANT OF LOVE, caused my eternal damnation. Jardac, as I learned, was enormously wealthy; and he had his time to himself. As five months drew to a close—was he tiring of me? was he filled with love to satiety? O God! no! Why did he not wish me with him so often?—why did he give me sharp, laconic replies? Would he cast me off now,—now when I was nearly five months *enceinte*?

* * * * * *

“Go!” the tone was stern, cold, and inflexible. “Go, I say. Thou hast lived here in luxury for five months. I am going to Rome, and alone.”

“Oh, Jardac,” I cried imploringly, despairingly, “—do not so cruelly cast me aside. Thou sayest I lived with thee in luxury—now I must go Oh, oh, oh, thou art cruel. I have been thy true and unreserved love; we have loved. Canst thou so forget thy promises and endearments?”

“Yes; I can. They were nothing to me. I have had many women as I had thee. They were cast aside;—why shouldst not thou also be? Art thou any better than they?”—said he, a leer of disdain on his face.

“No; I am a vile thing;—I know it. But I left home for thee; I left my mother—perhaps broke her tender heart; I sinned and gave up Heaven for thee,” I sobbed.

"I did not compel thee to stay with me. I left thee to thine option. I know I influenced thee,—that circumstances and actions worked for me—that is not thy fault. But I said to thee when I brought thee here: 'If thou wilt not be mine, to live with me, say so, and I will cast thee to the floor and leave thee!' Thou didst willingly answer: 'I will be thine.' Thy free will was working. As for leaving home for me—others have also done so; as for losing Heaven—there is no such place. I am wifeless,—I lied to thee. I am a Pagan, a Roman, a friend of Herod's, a bacchanalian....I acted my part very well; I am an excellent protagonist. Now for the *finale*!—Give me a parting kiss and bless me, my dear; then go to be stoned by men who follow a loving Jehovah!"

"Oh, Jardac! thou art breaking my heart," I pleaded, piteously.

"I thought that I possessed thy heart. Thou didst often tell me that I did have it; now she says she has it!" He smiled a mocking, sneering smile, as though addressing some other one present.

He then bent down and kissed me; then exultingly, relentlessly said, in a dominant tone of mockery:

"Go, animal!—I need thee no more."

He entered the door, banged it . . . I was left alone! This was the reward of my trust!—Was it not just? I gave forth a wild wail of mad despair and a harrowing moan of sullen anguish,....and turned—to go—where? Yes, where should I go? Would any one receive *me*? . . . But perhaps my mother might forgive me. I would go and ask her. If they would

stone me, I should be out of misery,—for what had I to live for? Love was gone;—hence all was gone. Instead of being betrothed as was the custom, to Jardac, we had loved of our volition; instead of being lawfully married in rich garments embroidered finely with pearls, veils, and gold, we had slain Love by sin, clothed in garments of clouds; instead of thus marrying and purely living, we had loved in an unrestrained, unconventional way. I had sinned for love; I had sinned willingly, aye, gladly. I had gladly complied to all Jardac's desires. And now—now I was deserted, betrayed. . . .

This is the fruit of sin. Oh, so bitter! Had we loved purely, we could yet have been in joy—so sweet! I wailed at this thought—remorse maddened me. Had I been true to myself, to God, I should not have fallen. Herein is the grandeur, the help of true Religion. Insufficiency of religion let me fall. Hence I cry to the sad world to-day—telling the transcendent efficacy of religion in resisting temptation,—showing how I fell in the insufficiency of religion. Faith is the fulcrum of Virtue,—and Virtue is in a precarious state To-day:—Virtue stands on the precipitous crag of Priestcraft, Hypocrisy, Sensuality and Irreligion.

“Oh, Jardac,” I cried in a clamorous wail, “my love! Oh, oh, oh! . . . thou hast broken my heart, . . . taken my honor, . . . given me shame. . . . and I—I loved thee so! . . . I love thee still—” I broke off in inarticulate sobbing. I heard a laugh of derision from above, and looking up, whom did I see but Jardac—Jardac at an open casement, peering through some

vines which crept over the exterior walls. His face had on it the expression of a beast delighting in the torture of its victim; he doubtless enjoyed the sight of my impotent misery and grief. Oh, it was bitter—bitterer to my soul than aloes or gall is to the mortal tongue. I shook with an icy chill—a pang of horror.

“ Oh, colder than the wind that freezes
 Fonts that but now in sunshine play'd,
Is that congealing pang which seizes
 The trusting bosom, when betrayed.”

I was in an anguished state; icebergs pressed upon me; fire consumed me; and in a pitiful look at Jardac, I mutely but eagerly besought some pity. As my eye caught his, he threw a kiss—a kiss signifying mockery and disdain—at me; it stung me; and, without uttering a sound, I ran, ran, and ran—I ran till I could run no longer, and I then sank prostrate, exhausted on the grass-covered earth.

Oblivion encompassed me. I slept....And when I awoke night was fallen. The stars twinkled and scintillated in the deep violet sky; the moon was full; the evening wind was vivifying, invigorating, and exhilarating in its pastoral freshness. The scent of various trees and shrubs was wafted to me on the gentle zephyr. I felt better, stronger, more hopeful—though my grief was little abated. I sat quiet for a little while, then arose, yawned, and began to walk towards Jerusalem.

Was I any different now than when I had walked it over five months ago? Ah, what a change had

taken place in me. Then love was pulsating in my simple heart,—now I was fluctuating between love and despair. I loved Jardac still, not as I used to,—but *something* in me loved him—what that vague something was I could not tell. Had he asked me to return to him, would I have done so? Yes; I would have complied to his request and gladly returned. What a mingling and commotion of memories—memories sweet, pure, tender, and sad—came to me! O God! Thou alone dost know what I then suffered—that is beyond my power to delineate or depict to man. Only he who so suffers knows—and the suffering is acute; it is hell. I walked on, walking slowly, and in an hour I entered Jerusalem, and continued walking towards my home.

“What will mother say? What will father say?” I inwardly, fearfully, anxiously asked myself, looking upward, to find myself at my old home—the home of undesecrated memories—memories of when I was a pure and simple child without stain. As I gazed at the familiar trees, flowers, and doorway,—as I gazed at the window of the room in which my mother slept, I threw myself upon the ground and shed bitter tears.

“O lost childhood! O lost virtue!....where are you? . . . lost in infinity? never to return? . . . O mother, dear, dear mother, were I only as pure as thou art! Oh, that I were pure . . . *Now!* Now I realize that my destiny was to be good—I went astray. O God, have mercy—”

“*Nathana—*”

Who spoke? Did I not hear my name being gently called?

"My poor child . . ." came in this sweet, low, modulant voice. I instinctively glanced up to my mother's window. Yes, there she stood—there stood the mother who had been forgotten, the mother who still remembered me. Did she still love me? Oh, I hoped she did. I longed for her pure, sinless love;—for what earthly love to an aching soul is like unto the mother's love? I could almost be happy if she would come and lay those undefiled hands of hers on my brow; I could almost be happy if she would speak words of pardon and comfort to me; and I could almost be in happy ecstasy if—but no; she would not dare kiss *me*. I would not, even if she wished, allow her to stain her lips by kissing mine—mine which had been kissed so often, and kissed unlawfully.

The figure moved from the window, . . . in several minutes it was beside my prostrate form speaking.

"My poor, lost babe, my little girl!" . . . she said, "what art thou now? . . . My poor, frail child"—and she began sobbing, and those tears fell upon my flesh, and they burned me,—they were as "coals of fire" on my head. "Nathana! speak! speak to the mother whose heart hath been broken, who hath bitterly paid the price of her negligence. . . . who, obeying the priests, served Jehovah but in name, after fashion."

I by a supreme effort forced myself to gaze at that face.

"Mother," I faintly faltered.

Those angelic hands smoothed my brow; her kind words soothingly comforted me.

“Nathana, I was amiss in my rearing of thee,” she sighed, “I prayed and prayed, yet even then I did not serve God rightly!—I forgot thee. I taught thee the faith of our fathers dogmatically, without deep meditation;—I should have taught thee truly to love God; I should have depicted His love and mercy and goodness to thee in every leaf and flower, not only on the altar of sacrifice.”

“Reproach not thyself, mother; it is my fault that I am what I am,” said I, painfully.

“But let that pass, child, for the present,” said she; “but I repented and suffered. No one shall know of thy sin and thy shame. Thou shalt be taken care of. Come!”

“Father?” . . . I almost inaudibly asked.

“Thy father,” said she sadly, “is dead. Speak not of him....the memories are bitter. He is with Abraham and Moses,—thanks be to the Maker,—his body lies in the sepulcher in fine linen at rest.”

She helped me to rise and led me into the house. Comforting me, she led me to her chamber and sat me upon her clean, spotless mattress.

“I am defiling this!” I exclaimed. She answering, said:

“I am here in place of God; I am thy mother. Even if thou defile these material things, thou dost not defile my soul. Let me help thee, winning a high place in Heaven with John” (my father).

Can I tell how that night was passed? how I told

her of my love and sin, of my delight and despair? Can I tell how, as my head lay on that pure bosom, she smoothed my golden hair? I can inadequately tell: it was a night of heaven to a lost soul. Ah, how I loved her! yet I did not yet really *love* God nor repent of my sin. I was sorry for it; yet had I been asked to return to Jardac, I willingly would have done so. It would have hurt me to leave her, but I would have done so for him. I deserved no pity, no help,—but God is very good.

* * * * *

I lay on my mattress one December morning. The sun arose and cast his cheerful beams into the room. My face was wan, yet happy, for beside me lay a being;—two chubby arms were around my neck; two deep, innocent blue eyes were fixed on mine; and sweet little lips uttered an “Ooh, ooh!” I kissed them, hugged the child to me. O! I loved it—loved it as one destitute of love loves. I almost adored and worshiped it. It was my child, and it was two weeks old. My mother loved it and was kind to it, as she had been kind to me for four months, hiding me from the public and loving me.

The expression on the innocent child’s face was serenely angelic; there was a far-off expression in its eyes; on its face was an innocent smile.

“Baby,” I muttered, “we shall dress and go below, for mother will have breakfast ready, thou little angel.”

I arose, dressed myself, then the child. I pressed it to my bosom, gazed at its face.

"It looks like Jardac, yet there is something in baby which is not in Jardac. O Jardac! love! dost thou know of this?"

Did the baby see the tear that fell from my eye?—he sympathetically laid his face near to mine. Such a little mite! yet what love did I not lavish on him!

We went below. I almost happily entered the kitchen.

"Where is mother, baby?" I cried, "Mother! mother!" No answer was awarded....

The presentiment of some catastrophe came to me—the foreboding of a shock. I went to the door to look out—What was that under the distant tree? I walked near....I saw it was my mother in a kneeling posture. She was so still! so silent!....Was she praying in the cold?....I went to her,....looked at the motherly face—O God! she was dead—my mother was dead! A peaceful smile was on that face—a smile of joy, a rapturous smile. Those white, wan hands were clasped in prayer. No trace of disease or cold marred that sweet, tranquil face—as sweet in death as it had been in life. The gray hair formed a coronal of glory; the lips were red, not blue; they were opened in prayer. The eyes were turned heavenward—but they were glossy! She did not move....

"Mother! mother!" I wailed. I frantically kissed those lips—once, once again for the baby....Sobs welled up in my throat.

"She is happy,—she is in Heaven, where perhaps I shall never go. Mother, it is well that thou art dead. All I wish is that thou dost only pray for me,"

I mutely wailed in appeal. My mind began to leave me. I was as crazed. . . . I frantically rushed into the house, methodically caught several cloaks, wrapped them around baby and me, gave a parting glance at the old home, stepped out of the door, and distraughtly went out on the highway,—left the home forever.

Let some kind neighbor wrap her dead frame in linen, cover her face with a napkin! let him show all the signs of form,—but she—the pure soul—was gone. An idea had seized me that I must run, wander, and roam. Her dead body maddened me—made me so lonely. It was only a chrysalis . . . She was gone . . . I could not stay there without her, my only living comfort. I could find respite in wandering,—and I would wander. My head ached, my eyes pained me, and a sense of irreparable loss gnawed at my heart. My head seemed turned, I lost my senses. Yes, yes, I had baby—whom I loved as the child of Jardac; but mother, mother—oh, sad sorrow!—was dead—dead, I vaguely thought. On, on I walked out of Jerusalem. I dimly remembered how Jardac had led me from Jerusalem once, how absorbed in love I had then been, how oblivious to all but him I had been; all was beauty and love then,—all was desolation and sorrow now. I wandered awhile on over hills, down precipices, past cheerless trees. Ever and anon I would rest, sitting quietly, then I would arise and shriek . . . Oh, terrible was my fretful, irascible misery! At times I would dully apostrophize baby in my despair, the poor little thing!—yes, he still lived. I fed him at times from

instinct, but for myself thought not of food. A cool chill wind blew, and my body became cold; dark clouds hung in the sky—and I felt more desolate and weary. At times memory would become sharp, and I would mutter curses against God, revile Him. I would seize baby, violently shake him till he would cry, then kiss and caress him. Then I would sit down, draw the cloaks tighter around us and gaze blankly at the threatening sky. I moaned, wailed for mother in harrowing cries, cursed Jardac when I thought of him, then would fall into a dull state, to be awakened by wild cries—cries which my frightened imagination evoked in the wind. Mother—mother . . . dead? Oh, my head ached, grew dizzy . . . Jardac—where? And I would wander on....Angry tears of regret would roll from my eyes. What a sad plight was mine. I was madly miserable, dully dejected, and now, as evening was coming, a fierce thirst parched my burning throat. I found some wild, half-dead, acrid herbs; I omnivorously ate them . . . Bah! I was sickened . . . O, for a drop of fresh water, for a crust of barley bread! I felt as though my stomach was a dead vacuum, and I instinctively ached for food. My limbs ached with a rheumatic pain, for I had gone up and down so many, many hills, I had bruised myself on so many rough stones. Yet I cared not. Bodily discomforts comparatively did not bother me. Go on, poor, forlorn, distraught creature, suffer pain—and gain joy. Baby, baby, sweet little child!—its lips quivered with the chilliness of the wind. I warmed him, fed him;—ah, better. I wildly laughed and then

I ran . . . Evening fell; the sun set behind clouds; and now night was falling. . . . A sickly sensation grew upon me, my legs grew stiff, . . . my head . . . dizzy; it swam. My eyes . . . bulged from . . . their sockets; . . . my breath grew . . . labored . . . very difficult . . . Jardac, mother . . . oh, good God! my poor brain grew blank, and I sank to the earth, fretfully fell into a sort of lethargic sleep—"to die!" . . .

Oh, God of Glory!—what . . . *what was that!* I sprung up, holding baby aloof. My soul seemed to awake, and a strange joy made me utter a cry! What instinct . . . made me awake—after a long period of resting sleep?

I gazed around me, amazed, dumfounded . . . Lustrous faces bright and beautiful smiled at me; . . . away . . . off . . . some half-formed creatures glanced at me with wild smiles of hate. . . . And . . . and . . . what delusion of my senses was this? The undulating land as far as I could see was literally covered with magnificent flowers—wondrous flowers, blossoms of a golden, luminous hue, whose corallas were brightly golden, whose pistils and stamina were of a sparkling silver, and the delicious fragrance they exhaled was transporting in its sweetness. A warm zephyr blew by me, and on it were unintelligible messages—sweet words of rapture, songs of love! Startled, amazed, electrified into life, I gazed, gazed. . . . The night was full of witchery—nay, nay . . . was it night? No, for that . . . *that*—that glorious thing dissolved the darkness. Up . . . there . . . so transcendently grand . . . a monstrous cross of living, moving, glowing fire shone

. . . I trembled . . . with vague ecstasy.—Was this the reward of my suffering? Was this one act of Providence acting towards the salvation of a mortal's soul? Did kind spirits of the air cause me to leave home. . . . wander hither?

“What—what is. . . .this?” I fearfully cried, with a vague premonition of something about to happen. I did not understand. . . .What miraculous thing. . . .or mad illusion. . . .was this? I timidly walked forward, a strange sensation of overwhelming joy in my bosom. Ah, how grand! . . . The indescribable grandeur of this significant Sign was dazzling in its scintillant points of flame. “Come—come—come. . . .GLORIA—!” seemed wafted to me by gentleunseen voices. On. . . .I walked towards this wondrous fire, holding baby closely to me, my eyes glaring at it. In the short distance . . . it beamed, O supernal wonder, prognostic of the Divine! The brilliancy was intense; . . . it was of incandescent flame; . . . sparks splutteringly flew, hissed, flashed—O sacred thing! . . . it was a living light. . . .

A strange new hope filled me with expectation; joy animated me;—no bodily pains did I feel. The scene of almost barren land seemed to roll up before me and deliquesce. The glory of the Cross outshone all. . . What was wrong with baby?—he gave a strong jump,—a new expression entered his innocent eyes. “Ooh—ooh,” baby vociferously, continuously cried, as though he wished to express an opinion and was on account of his immaturity unable.

Nearer,—nearer did I falteringly approach. The

fiery arms of the moving, irisated Cross seemed open to swallow me. . . . My eyes ached,—they could hardly stand the intensely colored brilliancy of the animated flames. As in a dream—there came—came to my enthralled ears a song—a song seraphic, sweet, and triumphant. Could I stand this pre-natural glory? I knew not, in that instant, who and what I was. . . .

“GLORIA IN EXCELSIS DEO, ET IN TERRA PAX HOMINIBUS BONAE VOLUNTATIS.”—*Glory be to God on High, peace and good will on earth to man.*

With this *Gloria* ringing in my ears, I went to the Cross. The fiery blaze of rainbow colors grandly encompassed me! On—on! I seemed propelled onwards! I seemed to be entering the fiery form, . . . further!—I was being swallowed into its symbolic arms! . . . Hosanna, O Glory, O Glory! . . . a moment more—and I was in an almost dark chamber—a rude stable.

CHAPTER III.

INFANS AMORIS.

“ The one great purpose of creation, Love—
The sole necessity of Earth and Heaven.”

WHITTIER.

WAS I in a cave? a stable? . . . I had walked down a steep incline, the glory of that radiant, lustrous mystic Sign around me. My eyes were dazed; . . . blue vapor floated before me; . . . small circles of yellow and crimson flame whirled in the air. I heard the rushing of waters, the moaning of wind, the bray or cry of an animal. I smelt the fragrant scent of flowers mingled with the scent of hay and straw. Gradually the opalescent mist, the many colored circles, the blue vapor, all which were around me, faded away; the rushing of water became subdued. . . . I heard the sound of voices. My sanity returned to me. I rubbed my eyes, . . . gazed before me—and, lo!—what did I see? Nothing but a Child and two simple personages behind Him, and before Him five humble, dirt-stained shepherds. What did this indicate? Where was I?—In a stable somewhat large;—there were stacks of hay around two sides of the wall; at the farthest end were an ox and an ass in a roughly

made stall. Their eyes glared lovingly and humbly at the Infant, who near them lay in a manger full of straw, "wrapped in swaddling clothes." An humble place was this, but—a feeling of joy which I could not analyze, overcame me. I felt ashamed. The baby in my arms "Oöhed" and "oöhed," jumped and smiled. I gazed at the strange scene being enacted before me. There was the manger, old and worm-eaten,—and in it a Child—a small Mite, a sweet-faced Infant, whose golden locks, though sparce, shone like a halo of supernal light, in whose eyes—tender blue eyes—was a queer expression;—a look of pity and sorrow intermingled with joy, shone from them. Into these wonderful eyes the Mother gazed lovingly. She, the Mother, was a fragile creature, whose beauty was splendidly sweet and pure,—not grand and dazzling like the "society beauty" of to-day. She seemed weak, but she forced herself to minister assiduously to the Babe. The man—apparently the father—who stood back of the crib, was a rough, uncultured-looking man, but his physiognomy bespoke piety, love, and reverence; he was a faithful guardian at the manger. The animals slowly sniffed the air, then slowly moved to the manger, gazed down into the Child's face—the Child smiled at them! As though an instinct had been satisfied, they moved back to the place whence they had come, with a wise, sagacious, loving look in their eyes. I gazed upwards, lo, from the black fissures and crevices of the rocks, growing forth in luxuriant beauty, starry flowers of a million shining hues crept forth, singing a mute joyful song

of fragrant joy! I was startled. Strange, amazing! Flowers growing at this season, . . . and that Child! Humble shepherds prayed before Him, nudged each other with smiles of wondrous joy! The sweet Mother—the Child! O! a feeling of tremendous joy and love submerged my soul, and intuitively I felt that this—this was—a . . . a . . . God!

“And thou, Bethlehem Ephrata, art a little one among the thousands of Judea; out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be Ruler in Israel: and His going forth is from the beginning, from the days of eternity.”

These words echoed in my ears. My mother had often spoken them of the promised Messiah. And the words now being spoken, *in my mother's voice*, forcibly struck me. Was I in Bethlehem? . . . Was this the Christ-Child? . . . I fell on my face in humility! . . . Dare I go near Him, He who came to save sinners? With a shameful face, a trembling form, I arose and with downcast eyes approached the manger. The shepherds after a mute, soulful prayer, arose and, without speaking a word, reverently left the subterranean stable. I forced myself to the manger—the Mother and “father” did not seem to notice me; they were under the influence of God. I *felt* that this was the Christ-Child.

I gazed for only a moment at the Child. He glanced pityingly at me. I remembered my SIN. . . . I almost repented. I was not quite sure that this was the promised Messiah. He seemed so humble, almost like any other child. But His eyes! they shone with pre-

cocious love, grief, and joy mingled. And those supernatural, fragrant immortelles of bloom—!

“Is this the Christ-Child?” I muttered.

There then suddenly sounded in the air the flapping of a million downy, shining wings, darkness slowly began to encompass me, I was falling,—falling into what unimaginable depths profound? . . . Who and what was I?—I was in interminable, illimitable darkness.

“*Is this the Christ-Child,*” I heard someone ask, *in my own voice*, though I spoke not.

There resounded then an ominous crash of deafening thunder, a flash of white fire flew through the air—not only a flash was it, but as I saw it fly past me, I saw a face—my dear mother’s kindly face! Her expression was divinely angelic; her face was young, perennial in its freshness; her hair was molten golden, and her eyes seraphic blue;—no wrinkle marred that flawless countenance which shone as living flame. . . . A moment only did I see it, also I saw her hands upraised in enthralled prayer. Then slowly, distinctly, and sweetly, a Voice grand and sublime, said:

“Child of Sin and Doubt, let doubt no more assail thee: THAT Child is the God-Child, the Child that will show Man how to live, who will die, not to calm anger, but to show that Death is Life, and lift Man higher. This is the Child who, by the prayer of Anne, thy mother, thou art allowed to see,—to worship. Accept this surpassing opportunity,—hold fast to all ger-

minating graces; for temptation will assail thee;—but overcome it, and it will prove a blessing.”

I awoke! awoke from—what? sleep? . . . Before me was the Child—It was my God—the God whom I had forgotten, whom I had grievously sinned against. He came here to troubled earth; the cold atmosphere was biting His frail, tender form. . . . He had come to love and to die—for sinners, *for me*. A terrible love surged through me. My Soul was keenly awake; I was living. Oh, I would that I were able to depict this greatest Love! . . .

“Child! Child! I love Thee, for Thou art my God. I sinned! I repent! I would that I were pure! . . . O Holy One, purge my soul! . . . let me suffer grief, death,—anything! only make me pure enough to love Thee.”

I grew warm. I seemed to effervesce in the ecstatic joy of that transcendent moment . . . but smoting shame was upon me. Oh! if I were only worthy to kiss those unsullied, sweet, little, tender hands! There I humbly knelt in absolute silence before the loving Babe, my soul joyfully singing vehement glorias! This was the Babe who, to show that Humility is a virtue, humbled Himself to take man's form; who, to show His love for poverty and unostentatiousness, was born in the stable; who, to show Man how to live, lived a life entirely exempt from sin, pure, prayerful, and obedient; who, to prove His love for Man, died an ignominious death on the Cross . . . Him I was before,—this Child who was as no other child,—He, who in Love came down from

Heaven, and truly—now, then, and forever—is—INFANS AMORIS.

Baby sat in my arms, quiet and mute. A queer, knowing smile passed between him and the Infant—a smile that seemed to say:

“We know each other; we shall soon be together.”

The Virgin-Mother lovingly caressed the Child; Joseph alertly watched with zealous, astute solicitude. He, the incarnate God, was here to be adored,—I would adore Him:—He was here, the Great Example, the Prototype of Perfect Life.

I bowed my head to the earth in my self-acknowledged subjective unworthiness. I thought of my unrecallable past life—a life of unlawful love and guilty sin. Ah, I bitterly repented of my sinful life; *now* I repented, though in my heart I loved Jardac still—loved him holily, not licentiously. I prayed for forgiveness and for pardon; I prayed for Jardac I meditated on the Love of this God-Child, on my extreme unworthiness to be here. But He came to save sinners—not the just. He humbled Himself so much as to allow *me* to be near Him at His birth! . . . Who shall say that His Humility and Love are not beyond all compare? If He should forgive me, I would go and live for Him alone, trying to win His kingdom—A doubt assailed me! . . . perhaps He would not forgive me. . . .

“Christ, wilt Thou forgive me?” I wailed, imploringly.

Then a sort of dull obscurity fell over me, . . . my sight grew stronger, . . . I saw the faint outline of

material, stone, hay—before me were lucid, parallel bars of light—brilliant light, etherious, of rainbow glory. And as my sight grew stronger, other glories came to me. I saw circles of ever-multiplying fires, and these were full of ever-increasing beauties. And my soul waxed stronger, my vision grew accustomed to the glories coming to me. The confusing multiplicity of radiant splendors unfurled to me as I grew able to stand it, was blighting almost. What a dazzling manifestation of a God's descent from Heaven! I saw spiritually; I saw His birth as it really was—surrounded by glittering angels and polyphonic strains of celestial sound. And I recoiled,—amazed,—afrighted. My body seemed as a veil over me; I saw through it, and I exulted in the exalted Glory of Heaven. And if it had not been for the strength of my soul, my body would have melted in the fervor of love, in the sight of an Immortal God of Love. There lay the Child of Love in the crib—He who loved children, who was as a child, who taught all to be as children, loving, pure, and holy. O—O—He was dazzling! . . . He was brighter than sun-flame! I cannot describe Him—it was God's Spirit whom I saw, the Majestic Spirit of Love! Around the crib were a multitude of heavenly spirits, . . . they were burning, living, fiery beings; their countenances were as lightning—sweet, lovable, and sublime. But their brilliancy was as naught compared with the exalted brilliancy of the Child—nay, God—in the crib. He not only lay on a crib, but under Him were billows of snowy clouds, through which at times evanescently,

like to opal fire, flashed iridescent color and flame. And from Above shone a circular ray of beaming light—a Pathway in which the angels moved. On either side of the crib was a dark steel-grey colored cloud,—and in the middle of these two clouds, HE shone, a million times brighter than the sun. His countenance was brilliant with exquisite Love,—and a Smile—such a Smile, a Smile of exquisite mercy and grand forgiveness to sinners, a Smile of transcendental glory to the just—surged across that sweet, pure, God-like Face. And as I watched Him lying on those snowy clouds, which were ever and anon flashing with iridescent flame, I saw a Circle of Light grow about His head, . . . it flashed, and was of silver, blue, crimson, and gold light interwoven, . . . it grew, expanded, and widened in its colored glory, . . . widening and multiplying, it encompassed the stable, . . . quivering like eddying water when a stone is thrown into it, widening, growing, this lustrous, beaming Ring encompassed the World itself! . . . The Re-incarnation of the World was begun—begun at the birth of Him who to the World would give as a baptism, a New Law—a Law made perfect by pure Love. And up into the Path of Radiance colored meteors flashed prismatically—in lurid flame—from this Mystic Ring encompassing its God. . . . As the light of the Ring passed over me, I became as it were reborn; I felt strong, joyous, and exaltingly happy . . . Yet, as a poignant rapier, there stung in my heart that dagger thrust of conscience—sentient Shame. Oh, God! I acutely suffered! . . . As I realized what glory it was given

me to see, as I felt the holy radiance of that ineffable Love shining from out those blue, flaming eyes, then I realized my utter Unworthiness, my undeniable Little-ness. Every scene of my sinful life appeared before me in awful vividness, as in a phantasmagoria,—and in heaven I suffered hell! . . .

“I am not worthy—not worthy——” I muttered.

A smile of forgiving welcome irradiated that intensely fiery, shining Face of Love Divine. I felt soothed.—Oh! how sweet was the love that swayingly surged through my very soul! . . . I strainingly gazed up into the radiant Pathway shining from Above. Beautiful, brilliant angels were ascending and descending;—their luminance was as electric flame; their sublime countenances expressed triumphant joy, irrepressible glory, and heavenly exaltation;—and from their lips there continually flowed that song, which beginning then, has been since sung perpetually, in memory of His birth, by both angels and men,—that song of joy:

“Gloria,—Gloria,—Gloria,—*Gloria in excelsis Deo!*
. . . Gloria,—Gloria,—*et in terra pax . . . hominibus*
. . . *bonae voluntatis* . . . Gloria—Gloria—Gloria in
excelsis . . .” A sublime, crashing peal of harmoni-
ous, heavenly music was vibrating tunefully in the air
—music glorious and joyous—for the birth of the
World was begun,—the World born to Love perpet-
ual, Life eternal, and an actual Glory everlasting.
The music kept on, made by the angels, etherial, ever-
radiant creatures of flame. It awoke all heretofore

somnific good in my soul. I felt exalted and joyous
—Who would not feel joyous on such a morn!

In the angels' hands were flowers not of earth, but amaranthine flowers of extraordinary, perennial beauty from Heaven,—flowers that would never fade, whose scent would never lessen. And these flowers of iridescent color, flowers shining with a silvery luster, they—the angels—offered to Him who lay, a gloriously blinding vision of Light Supernal, in the manger on rainbow-illumined clouds. . . . Presently there broke into the angels' music and song the unprecedented song of dulcet-toned birds—sweet birds of tune; they sang their carols sweetly, joyously, as though they were effervescing in excessive rapture. They sang their *glorias* tunefully, in harmony with the other angelic voices. Soon again another glory became visible to me; flaming sparks and coruscacious stars of every hue whirled and blazed in this circular Path,—and forming into a precise circle, they orbicularly revolved around Him, the King of Stars! A brilliant, amazing spectacle of a God's manifestation was this! . . . Hardly could any mortal eye stand this terrific yet serene celestial glory. . . . Then . . . He—the SPIRIT—spake . . . ah, to my mortal ears those mellifluous accents were unendurable, to my Soul they were as nourishing wine. I heard that Voice—the Voice which makes angels rejoice and devils tremble for very rapture—saying in music Divine:

“Thou art forgiven,”—ah, what a sweet consoling sentence,—a sentence that for ages to come shall be the joy of repentant sinners,—“inasmuch as all who

repent and grieve for their sins are forgiven by my Father's permission in Heaven. Contrition merits forgiveness, atonement merits pardon,—inasmuch as both merit joy. I leave Heaven and come to earth; this mission of love I enjoy. Yet taking Man's form I suffer, for as Man I can grieve,—and seeing the malicious and hideous sins of men to be perpetrated in ages to come, I acutely suffer. My heart is torn . . . Oh, if Man would only realize that I come from Heaven to forgive, not condemn,—could he only bring himself to know Me as I am! . . . Thou art forgiven. *Go, and sin no more!*"

What a sweet command! . . . Who could disobey it? Gazing at Him—for an instant only—did I see Him,—HE IS GOD. And beside Him whom did I see?—A radiant Angel in Woman's form,—a Soul spotless and free from stain,—a creature whose dazzling luminance was as grand as the angels themselves,—a being around whose head circled a coronal of roseate and azure flame, intermingled with many sparkling, silvery meteoric stars,—a Woman whose beaming smile was compassionate and loving,—whose virginal purity women should copy from,—whose sweet motherly solicitude for her Divine Son is an Example of a mother's true duty and love,—whose hands carefully ministered unto her Son, and which now are beloved by angels. Ah, what a vision of Woman undefiled—as she should be! What a Mother, what a Queen! So he lies who says that She was "only" woman, sinful and impure. Can God, the Spirit of absolute Purity, enter a defiled form? No; He can

only enter one which is similarly like Himself, wholly pure and unreservedly lovable. And She was this, this Mother of Christ. Around Her played meteor-like flame, and a roseate grandeur enveloped Her. Her soul was brilliant and dazzling, and it is no wonder God could love such a one . . . yet every mother can become so fair an angel. O! what a Destiny for Woman!

I gazed upward into the sky—for I saw as though the rocks above me were transparent—and saw a Being . . . falling, descending! . . . It was the Figure of one whose form was tall and majestic, but whose face was dark with deep suffering and torture, and from his eyes shone “the worm that dieth not, and the flame that cannot be quenched” . . . There were depicted on his face grief unendurable, agony above torture—torture above measure—measure above compare. But as he downward came, a ray of hope faintly irradiated his grand, yet withal terrible countenance. At length . . . he sank into the stable, . . . down to the earth bent he in lowly humility, . . . inexpressible joy shook his fiery frame. He was behind me. I felt his burning presence, yet I was not afraid . . . At him the Divine Child cast a glance of appealing commiseration and heartfelt pity, as though saying: “Poor Satan, thy troubles are hard to bear, but perhaps a better day will come.” And I heard a voice sibilantly, faintly whisper: “Where sinful man is, Satan, the ruler of things very dark, can also be. His intense joy is beyond measure that he has a chance, for a little time, to be before his God . . .” What must not the

Love of this Child be! . . . He allowed even Satan to worship at His birth! He also allowed *me*; He forgave me. Ah, sinners, His Love is beyond all compare! His Mercy is beyond all human solution!

Suddenly to me the Ring began to diminish and disappear; the grand Circle shining from Above faded away; the angels disappeared from my vision. A grand peal of mysterious music made the very air tremble—and with a minor wail of farewell it slowly, wailingly ceased; the glory of the queenly Virgin-Mother faded away into a luminous maze, . . . the maze fading into the air, leaving her as only woman to my vision. Naught remained but a sign:

The two dark clouds were on each side of the Child. The scallop-like edges of the clouds were fringed in silvery light, and between these somber, grey, silver-edged clouds, He shone like a Rising Sun, His radiance shining forth in soothing colors of indescribable grandeur;—lights of opalescent tint shot and radiated from Him . . .

“ ’Tis the Dawn of Salvation! . . . The Dawn of Hope for both Devil and Men,” said a silver-toned Voice from Above.

I turned . . . to see white and crimson fires playing around the styled “King of Darkness,” who, if the truth were known, reluctantly suffers and rules and toils in Evil,—who would probably gladly grasp at a suitable opportunity to redeem himself if it were offered,—who will not of his own free will leave evil and thus save himself. The sweet songsters of carol were still singing; no birds did ever before sing so

light-heartedly, so sweetly, so sublimely! . . . At length the song ceased, . . . a wind seemed to pass over me, . . . a cloud of quivering darkness, seemingly a portent of evil, came rolling along, and passing over the Spirit behind me, carried him also away, . . . a clap of long-drawn thunder ensued:—the Vision of unparalleled sublimity was gone!—I was awake. . . . and I saw as corporeal eyes see—not as things really are, but as they seem. I gazed at the Child!—hot, bitter tears were falling from the Child's supernal eyes. His form trembled and quivered in His intense, puissant grief. There He lay, seemingly unconscious of the existing spiritual glories around Him. And gazing into His eyes, I saw . . . a Look—a Look of terrific Agony almost unendurable! There shone from those sacred eyes of tender blue a look of compassionate Pity and immortal Woe! . . . and from those baby eyes flowed crystalline tear drops. Tears . . . a mute prayer to the Father in Heaven—who is a Father of Love,—not a God of Vengeance,—a God of Loving Justice. The Virgin Mother eagerly endeavored to soothe Him, but in vain! . . . for who could soothe Him but Man only—Man for whom He shed those potent tears! How willingly will He not forgive, if it was for Man's doom that those tears were shed! Not then knowing the cause of the tears, I was nonplused and amazed.

“O sweet Child,” I almost inarticulately, but sympathetically cried, “why dost Thou shed bitter tears, . . . Thou who art God? . . .”

No verbal response did He vouchsafe me, . . . for

as a human babe He naturally could not. And, oh, how I lovingly pitied Him—this sweet holy God. As this chord of tender, compassionate pity throbbed in me, as this sense of commiseration for His primitive grief surged through my Soul, as I uttered the last words of my pathetic query, a darkness again enveloped me, . . . then . . . a yellow mist illumined the air before me . . . clearing slowly, . . . then I saw a series of visions.

I saw a Man, . . . before Him was a promiscuous crowd of men, and speaking, He said: "*He that heareth you heareth Me, . . . and He that heareth Me, heareth My Father who is in Heaven.*"—So said He, the God-Man, to several apostles and to the Priests.

* * * * * *

A heavy mist of unimpenetrable darkness came rolling in as this vision faded away, . . . then, as it cleared, I found myself in a large, stone, subterranean apartment—a part of the catacombs.—The atmosphere is damp and cool, the place dismal and dreary in its blackness. Mural decorations are here and there to be seen. There are many people assembled; they are on their knees; their eyes are meekly cast to the stone floor in reverence and humility;—many are most poorly clad. At a slab of stone stands a priest—a good, true man. They meditate, silently pray, and then arise, move to the stone. The priest comforts those who come to him, blesses them, and does as Christ would do. He then takes bread and wine, blesses it, breaks it, and together they eat in the communion of Christ. They are happy: Christ is with

them. "We assemble in His name: it is our duty," says the priest, "to Him and ourselves. Talk to Him; He will hear you. Confide and confess to Him; He will hear and forgive you. Then eat of this bread in the communion of the Body which suffered; then drink of this wine in the communion of the Blood that was shed." After the supper, they kneel again and thankfully pray,—and their prayers rise up to Heaven as incense in a forest temple. After cleaning the sacred utensils, the priest turns and smiles (a curious action for a priest would many think). There is no assumed look of sanctimonious piety on his open, happy face; no flourishing gestures, sucking of teeth, or expectorating; he has a peaceful conscience—why should he mourn? Is he not rightly happy?

"Brethren,"—his mellifluous voice breaks the silence,— "we are all assembled here this morning to celebrate the birth of our dear Saviour. Nearly two hundred years ago, brethren, He came to this earth and took on Himself man's form. He enjoyed this errand of salvation and mercy. He came to show an example. He came to teach man how to live. He came to give to man the New Law—a Law of Love which is perfect. He came to save sinners, and the repentant recreant He will never refuse to pardon. Had he not come, we should still, perhaps, be either under the Mosaic Law or in Paganism. Had He not come, many souls would be in awful grief. Had He not come, the power of Satan would perhaps be unlimited and strong. Realizing what benefits are derived from His humble birth, can we not help but

love Him? . . . Meditate on His life: see Him as a Child, obedient, docile, and loving; see Him as a man, teaching, healing, and forgiving; see Him in the Garden . . .” The priest’s voice sank low—“See the darkness around Him, . . . the apostles are asleep, He is alone. See His agony when He sees into ages to come, when He knows how many of the creatures He dearly loves will stray from Him, sin, and be lost. —Before we commit a sin, remember that Christ in the Garden suffered for those sins; and in compassion and love for Him and His grief, in the name of our souls which He loves, let us refrain from sinning. Let us see Him on the Cross; . . . see the darkness enveloping the earth—lo!—see the red sparks of flame shooting in the troubled sky, . . . see the dark rocks being torn asunder, . . . see the dead arise! . . . see the three crosses, . . . see the central One, . . . see Who is upon it! . . . Hear the roar of trembling thunder, the rattling of fierce earthquakes! . . . and see the awful Agony on His face, . . . see the hot scalding tears falling from His loving eyes, . . . see the wounds in His sacred hands—the hands which healed many, which could rule angels, . . . see the wounds in His sacred feet—the feet which trod the earth to find sinners, to comfort and to forgive, . . . see the wound in His heart—but that wound is not so bitter as the Wound inflicted by the atrocious sins of men! Hear the blasphemies and cries of derision! . . . hear Him in despair crying: ‘My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me’—this was to express His true grief, to show to what extent He was delivered

into the power of evil men ; for His Father,—His Self,—would not, could not, forsake Him. See the vinegar and gall offered to Him! . . . See Him die, a smile of Angelic Love illumining His fair countenance! He it is Who was born to-day. Let us love Him truly, wholly, with a heart-felt love.” There were tears in the man’s eyes ; there were tears in many eyes. He went on : “ To-day, when the remembrance of Him is in our souls, when we have Him by us—being gathered together in His name,—let us resolve that in spite of persecution and torture, Him only we will love and serve. We may be humbled and derided on this earth—but of what avail is the ephemeral glory of earthly things? Let us live for Heaven, following the example of the Christ of Love and Mercy, and we shall fare well. Follow Him in every way ; when beset by temptation, do as He did. When tortured, do as He did,—say for your enemies, ‘ Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.’ They know not what they do ; if they did they would not persecute us. They think they do right ;—God bless and lead them—lead them to the Cross! If they serve their faith truly, thinking they do right, Pagan or Gentile, they will doubtless go to Heaven. Despise them not ; hate them not ;—*love your enemies and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you.* If you repay them with malice, your conscience will judge and condemn you ; your thoughts will place you on your merited basis. If you love and pray for them, doing as the Redeemer did, they will be ashamed, will see good in you. For if you do not follow the Master,

how can they ever join you seeing you are no better than they. We must bear with one another, helping, praying for one another,—and the cross of sorrow shall prove to be joy, Death a transition to higher things. Follow the Saviour, the God in Man, living in poverty and faith, and the transcendental and everlasting joys of Heaven shall be your portion. Be not daunted by the cowardly pains of the arena or rack,—be not afraid of the lions ; hope in God—love God.”

A silence pervades the sacred place—a place rendered more sacred by the words of this Priest. It is this kind of Priest the world now needs, not one who preaches for gold and for the mundane glory of the Church,—but one who tells of Christ’s love, and exhorts sinners to repent,—who causes tears to flow. Of these, were the words spoken: “*He that heareth you heareth Me.*”

Before dispersing, they sing. Their voices rise high in fervor. They sing this happy hymn.

“ Shepherd of tender youth,*
Guiding in love and truth,
Through devious ways ;
Christ our triumphant King !
We come Thy Name to sing,
And here our children bring,
To shout Thy praise.

“ Thou art our holy Lord !
The all-subduing Word,
Healer of strife !
Thou didst Thyself abase,

* This hymn, roughly translated from the Greek, is said to be the oldest hymn of the primitive church.

That from sin's deep disgrace
Thou mightest save our race,
And give us life.

"Thou art wisdom's High-Priest!
Thou hast prepared the feast
Of holy Love.
And in our mortal pain
None calls on Thee in vain;
Help Thou dost not disdain,
Help from above.

"Ever be Thou our Guide,
Our Shepherd and our pride,
Our staff and song.
Jesus, Thou Christ of God!
By the perennial Word,
Lead us where Thou hast trod,
Make our faith strong.

"So now, and till we die,
Sound we Thy praise on high,
And joyful sing;
Infants, and the glad throng
Who to Thy faith belong;
Unite and swell the song
To Christ our King!"

A vapory mist of golden light, as of sunshine falling through clouds, carried this good vision away. Then I saw other visions—saw the evil ones which caused sorrow to encompass the heart of the Incarnate God. These visions quickly passed through my brain by a spiritual telepathy,—and in them I saw how, as ages went by, men would fight in sanguine battles and fierce wars and long for one another's lives—how kings, potentates, and queens would revel in treachery

and sensuality, depressing those under their control with a rigorous haughty sway; I saw how—above all sins the most egregious!—Christ's simple, supernal doctrine would be changed, and how the vile changers of it would make their abominable power of evil felt by barbarous, merciless tortures, how those under their displeasure would be goaded to sin by torment. I saw a vision of the Roman Inquisition:—I saw how those who elect to serve the gentle Christ, without a shred of pure Christianity in them, would toil with unflagging persistency to join temporal power and subjugate the rising truth-tellers, casting aside mercy, love, and pity in the doing of their wretched work. Yes, in the closing of that terrible vision, I saw a golden fane—and the fane was in a pitch-black darkness—and out of the darkness rose the hymn of thanksgiving, "*Te Deum Laudamus*," and a continual roar of cannon made the air tremble—and these sounds of earthly music and roar were mingled with the demoniacal praises, anathemas, and petitionings of human fiends;—and in this fane of stupendous, glaring, tawdry decorations was an altar—and before it was one whose aged face wore a saintly smile of joy, but whose miserable soul was a veritable devil in its sin,—it was a Pope of Rome, a "Representative of Peter," a "Vicar of Christ." And the huge Show continuing, a celebration of thanks that some heretics had been slain by the papist murderers, a sweeping, driving fire roared along, carrying the Papal aggregation away in a maelstrom of thunder and wind and fire,—and there rattled on the dismal air the menacing words

pronounced in thunder, "Ye workers of iniquity, ye know not of what spirit ye are,"—and a denser darkness fell. I saw visions of the beginning of the "Reformed Churches,"—how wrongly the work was done. I saw a Church, which was supposed to abrogate the evils of the Mother-Church, incarnated in the lust of a king, and born in the blood of the persecutions of a queen. Oh, the horror of the things that I saw! No wonder did the Son of God cry! Out of these visions I will narrate only the ones that may help the lost sheep of the Sad World of To-day.

The next vision which I will narrate is one which shows me a Priest of To-day, a typical priest, misrepresenting the Saviour Christ. This vision can show the deplorable difference between simplicity and elaboration when compared with the vision before told.—The priests are in touch with the people, more so than the prelates; and it is they who are greatly accountable for *the abomination of desolation* of the world to-day. Where is purity in the holy places? Nay, there is none, if little. The holy places are desolate, they are now dead bodies,—and *wheresoever the body shall be, there shall the eagles also be gathered together*,—the eagles that eat dead flesh, and with it make bait for the sheep,—and the sheep are led to the slaughter, *hearing of wars and rumors of wars*,—but the evil servant who leads the sheep astray will be confronted unexpectedly with the just Master whom he disregards, and the Master *shall separate him, and appoint his portion with the hypocrites*.

CHAPTER IV.

VISIONS.

I AM in a Christian church—a magnificent fane, huge, and gorgeously decorated,—for it is Christmas Day. The marble Altar is decorated with shining, verdant smilax, laurel, and ivy greens,—regal white lilies, rich roses, and odoriferous carnations also help to elaborate the beautiful Altar and Sanctuary; the scent of these fragrant beings permeate the air, lavishly scenting and sweetening it,—the lighted candles shine like many stars,—and the golden, jewel-incrusted sanctuary lamp shines like the Magi's Star;—aromatic pine trees are around the Crib, in which is an image of the Holy Christ-Child;—fancy, drooping evergreens are draped along the sanctuary walls and over the Altar, statues, and doors. The marble Altar is large, impressive, and grand; the Tabernacle, the receptacle of the Sacred Host, is brilliant and dazzling,—the elaborate paintings are rich and expressive. A large Crucifix is above the Altar, and upon it is the Figure of One who died so that others might live. What a sense of shame, of love, comes over me as I gaze at that mangled form so skillfully hewn out of white stone. And on each side of the Crucifix is a gilded angel, likewise

of stone,—and, as though wafted on a gentle wind, I hear the words:

“Thou shalt make also two cherubim of beaten gold on two sides of the Oracle.

“Let one cherub be on the one side, the other on the other.

“Let them cover both sides of the propitiatory, spreading their wings, and covering the Oracle, and let them look one towards the other, their faces being turned towards the propitiatory, wherewith the Ark is to be covered.”

Which words were familiar to me; which words are in the Old Testament—a Testament of the Jews, a Testament received by Christians as infallible, inspired writing, but which is full of writing not “inspired” infallibly.

“*Credo in unum Deum, Patrem omnipotentem, Factorem coeli et terrae, visibilium, omnium et invisibilium,*” I hear the loud, sonorous voice of the stout priest drawlingly singing. “I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth, and of all things visible and *invisible,*”—a grand confession! if only every one would believe and adhere to it. . . . I hear the unharmonious choir singing the *Credo*,—only one person sings from the heart, all the others frenziedly, jealously sing to show off their fine voices.

Ding! ding! ding! . . . “*Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus Dominus Deus Sabaoth,*” says the languid, corpulent priest;—following—a grand peal of triumphant music ensues, followed by a blare of operatic horns. Then comes an incongruous medley of screeches and sighs—

"Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus," sing the choir. The Mass continues.

Ding, ding, ding! The acolytes ascend the altar to hold the costly chasuble. "This is My body"—the Host is elevated. Ding—ding—ding! "This is My blood"—the Chalice is elevated. Ding—ding—ding! The choir renews its hysterical singing, which ceased before the consecration, and the Mass continues.

I gaze at the large congregation. A mixed crowd. And but few are good and pure in intention. Oh, the sadness of this desolation! Oh, the sorrow of faith laid waste, God desolated in the temple! The abomination of desolation is bitter! And how few are fervent! How many go through outward Form! A stern proclamation rings in my ears.

"Because iniquity shall abound, the charity of many shall grow cold."

Their charity is cold—made cold by the Priest who knows of God, but who voluntarily uses Him as a tool to extort money from the laity.

The lady of wealth, the *demi-mondaine*, and the sisters sit front. The Lady has a white kid prayer book and a pearl rosary; her eyes seemingly are closed, but instead are partially open, and she furtively "takes in" the style of her sisters' dress. Whenever she crosses herself, she makes a confused sign—a sort of semi-circle—not even touching her powdered forehead.

The wealthy Gentleman also sits in the front of the church. He comes to Mass for propriety's sake, not

even knowing its mystic meaning. Whenever he rises he gives a grunt of dissatisfaction, and kneeling, goes at it so wholly in earnest that he lets his huge, bloated, obese form of flesh and bones and little soul fall so heavily that he hurts his pachydermatous knee. Sensual thoughts of the coming night's pleasures fill his brain, and he goes awkwardly to the altar railing with the anticipation of sin beaming from his face.

Some nearly bend over their seats; some diligently peruse their prayers, gesticulating with religious fervor; some pray for fair weather, some for indulgences;—faith is in few, and those few are of the poorer class. With religious simplicity they pray, humble, meek, and mild. And when they are at the railing to receive the "Bread of Angels," the priest seems reluctant to feed them, and hastily growls out the Latin formula.

What an aggregation of people—people who profess the faith of the Man-Christ!

Here can be seen the Animal in Man, the Beast in Woman; Faith only in the Poor and the Children; the Metamorphosis of Devil to God! Yet whose fault is it? From whom do the offenses come? Who is it that quells the Spirit of Faith and places up Symbols, who fights over inane symbols, such as statues, relics, bones of saints, garments, etc.?

"Woe unto you, Pharisees, for ye make clean the outside of the platter, but within is all uncleanness!"

The sheep are led astray; they are blinded. They are led astray; the Son of God betrayed. O priests, does not the alarming tones of Justice's voice haunt

ye—" *Woe unto that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed?*" Yes, not to only Judas may these words be applied, but to all the clergymen who betray the Master, for they are greater sinners than Judas,—yes, by a thousand times.

After half of the Mass is said, the priest slowly rubs his hands, turns, and then reads the "*Epistle to Titus second chapter, eleventh to thirteenth verse,*" then "*Gospel according to Saint Luke, second chapter, first to fourteenth verse,*"—which Gospel gives an account of the birth of Christ. When he is done, he turns, smacks his thin, sensual lips, and rubs his obese, sanctimonious and pimpled face; then slowly, softly, persuasively, says:

"Dear brethren, in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost"—he crosses himself—" *And she brought forth her first-born Son, and wrapped him up in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them at the inn!*"

"Over nineteen hundred years ago to-day," he says, "Christ, the founder of our Holy Church, was born. Born in a stable, to show His humility—for it was a great Condescension." A look of rapt fear comes over this worthy man's oily, fat, florid face—"To think, after the Great Mystery of the Incarnation, a God was born in man's defiled form—born of Our Blessed Lady," (He does not seem to know that man's form if pure and undefiled is sublime, elevating and most beautiful.. "He was born in a stable," he continues, "among the beasts, the dumb beasts gave Him warmth"—he frowns darkly—"and, while the dumb

beasts kept Him warm, the Angels outside sang. The angels said to the shepherds, '*Fear not; I bring you tidings of great joy, that shall be to all the people!*' Tidings of great joy!—yes. Tidings that meant He would found our Mother-Church; He would give His Blood as our toll to Heaven!....What a privilege!—a privilege to belong to such a noble Church—a Church that has withstood storm and persecution, error and sin—a Church that has His Body and Blood on her altars, of which Melchisedec prophesied, in the Holy Mass—a Church that has the power of loosing and binding, given it by Him who is born to-day, by saying to Peter, the Prince of the Apostles, '*Thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it!*' On this grand statement we stand before you, ambassadors for Christ, to preach Him who is born to-day, to loose and to bind. Truly the angels brought glad tidings when such a thing was foreseen!—what glad tidings to us Catholics, who belong to the Church of the Rock, with the Vicar of Christ as our head!" He extends his arms in a flourishing, melodramatic gesture, and his eyes flame with pride, and his red face grows redder still with the grandeur of his profession.

I feel sad; and to me there comes a soothing voice, as the murmur of a flower through a gale saying:

"*Thou art Peter, an apostle, through whom God hath spoken; thou hast confessed me to be the Son of God; thou hast spoken by the revelation and inspiration of the Spirit: Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but My*

Father who is in Heaven. On this rock,—men full of faith, full of truth, as thou art now such a rock—men speaking by the revelation of God, and confessing and following Me,—I build My church,—My Church of Pure Faith in the hearts of men; and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it,—for if one have faith as a grain of mustard seed, Satan's power is of no avail."*

"Yes," the voice of the priest says—and he picks a smelling piece of flesh from a tooth with a pick, then blows his nose,—and goes on—"it—is—glad-tidings. It meant salvation for us, for before His death the gates of heaven were *closed*—were closed—were closed on sinful men. His blood opened heaven,—gave baptism to the Holy Church. We live on His sacred Blood; we have never, like our refractory brethren, departed from it. It causes me sadness to see the perverted Protestants doing—doing—" he suavely sucks his lips, and a bland smile of pity—an excellent simulation, by the way—comes over his face—"I cannot but pity them. They are lost, and they will not return to the original Light—the Light of which the Angels brought glad tidings, the Holy Roman Catholic Church! '*He that heareth you, heareth Me,*' said He who was born to-day to us—us the Priests. I may here say—" and he grew cold, and gazed reproachingly at the heterogeneous congregation—"that you do not show sufficient respect to the holy priests. You seem to be backsliding. And in the name of the Infant of Bethlehem, I adjure you to pause! Think!—You do not respect the priests as the old men of the old,

* Please to consult Matt. xvi: 15-18.

grand régime did. The new generation is more lax. We must draw the ropes tighter!—Think! Think of Him who was born to-day, the God in Man! Think of us priests, enunciators and promulgators of His teaching! Do we not merit respect and obedience? The priest is higher than the king on a throne, the president of a republic; Holy Orders places him above all, stamps him with the Cross of Christ, makes him a server of the Infant of Bethlehem—once and forever! You do not respect me. A certain lout from uptown said that I should go among the poor!—is it because I do not ‘go among the poor’ you do not give me sufficient deference? I tell you that a priest is not expected to go to those who come to church every Sunday except the pew-rent Sundays, then stay away so as to escape paying their just dues—he is not expected to go to them; he is not expected to go to the filthy slums, and get cursed in the bargain. Those who want conversion must come to the priest; those who want heaven must pay their just dues;—Christ did not run after the poor; He accepted the ointment of Mary! Our Protestant clergymen go to the slums and hovels of mire, you say—They do—a trick of Protestant charlatanism! You must respect me, you must pay your just dues. If you come to the tribunal of penance, get absolution, and then don’t improve and serve Holy Church, you are not forgiven. And when you die God will laugh at you, will condemn you to Hell. Then you will be in congenial company, and instead of going to balls, you will go to the exhibitions of God’s vengeance on vile sinners.”

He goes on in a sort of rhapsodical sermon, sometimes telling of the Infant of Bethlehem, how He humiliated himself,—how He founded the Priesthood,—how terrible the General Judgment will be when the Infant of Bethlehem would condemn the heretics and bad Catholics to Hell,—how hard it is for any one outside of “Holy Mother Church” to be saved.

“In confession,” he says, after a long, rambling sermon, “last night, one of you confessed that you had made a vile resolution, to begin with the new year, that is, you resolved to quit paying so much pew-rent. Now this person’s pew is well front in church. You need not decrease my salary; it is small enough. And as you are already making your resolutions, I shall make mine, and they shall go in effect next Sunday:—Thereafter I will not marry any Catholic to a non-Catholic unless he pays ten dollars for a dispensation and gives me a fee of five dollars or more. I will not work for nothing. * * * And I will not say a requiem mass for a dead person for less than ten dollars; if you are too poor for that, you need no requiem masses. And those who don’t pay pew-rent—I am not bound to visit them when they die.* You must be charitable—helping the Holy Church along. You get indulgences and manifold graces from her;—you should reward her. If you are not charitable, you know what to expect, for ‘*faith without works is dead.*’ ” His stern voice ceases

* These words were boldly and openly spoken in a church by a priest of the Roman Church, one of the “ambassadors in Christ,” who “represent” the Lover of Souls. And any one who studies what he hears, may perceive the blatant Lie of the Clergy; life is full of it;—the pages of the press is teeming with it.—AUTHOR.

its speaking for a moment. He picks a book from the altar.

"As this is the last Sunday of the month, I shall read the names of those who gave contributions to the erecting of an altar to the Virgin." He reads a list, in which the feminine portion of the church figures largely—the wealthy ones at least. The names of the poorer portion are not there,—and as he finishes reading, he gazes coldly towards the back of the church—and scowls.

"Now, friends," says the priest, concludingly, "collection will be taken up. And I wish you all a Merry Christmas. In the Name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Amen." After the collection is taken up he concludes the Mass.

The wealthy drive home from church, speaking of "Father John's dear, piquant sermons—who is so nice in confession,"—*to them*.

Many of the congregation stand before the church, criticize the priest, speak of presents, and of a coming bazaar. The Irish portion uphold the priest with a fanatical allegiance to him, speak of "taking a book of chances," and go home—a Duck or a Turkey paramount in their minds.

The poor, simple ones go home on this Christmas morning sad, embittered by his words. Say they: "We can't pay; we can't get graces;—God is cruel. Father John knows—he is bad—we will be; he has victuals, we have none. Curse God!" And despairing of mercy, with faith in "Father John," they will rush to Hell, thinking that as they will get there any-

how, they might as well sin and enjoy a little life;—all this egregious, grave evil is caused by the Priest who preaches not the Law of Love, who tells them not that Poverty is a grand recompense for their sufferings.

Darkness closes around me. And a Voice in the deep, sonorous accents of trembling thunder, I hear, saying:

“Is this priest true?—No, he is untrue to himself *and to Me*. He takes his position as a good, ingenious way to earn a fat living, with no work. He carelessly reads the Scripture, studying not what he preaches,—thus preaching Me not as I am. He uses holy power wantonly and without respect; he loves Me not; he is the one who grievously leads souls astray;—of him are the words spoken:

“Woe to the shepherds of Israel, that feed themselves; should not the flocks be fed by the shepherds?”

“You eat the milk and you clothe yourselves with the wool, and you killed that which was fat; but My flock you did not feed.

“The weak you have not strengthened, and that which was sick you have not healed; that which was broken you have not bound up, and that which was driven away you have not brought again, neither have you sought that which was lost; but you ruled over them with rigor, and with a high hand.

*“And My sheep were scattered, because there was no shepherd; and they became the prey of all the beasts of the field, and were scattered.**

“Ye priests, ye preach Me not as a God of Love;—

* Ezekiel xxxiv. 2-5.

if you would preach of My Love, of My Mercy, the souls, realizing My Love, would love Me in return, and would be saved, and their souls would enjoy the ecstatic rapture of being in My Presence; you do not do it. You are incestuous, lustful, and hypocritical. Instead of teaching the doctrine of Love, you preach the dissipating doctrine of Superstition and Mammon. Few of you follow the Way, the Light, and the Truth! You follow the crowned Pope of Rome—the Pope who hoards up wealth and gold, and denies himself to the people, who says ‘Let him be anathema,’ not, ‘Go and sin no more.’ He thus perverts the thoughts of good souls!—and woe betide the whited sepulchers of the world! In both the cathedral and the small chapel is howled forth the Doctrines of Gain, of Papal Infallibility, of Saintly Intercession, and a Dark, Burning Hell. I am pictured as the God of the Priests—a God who upholds the temporal Chair of Peter, who needed a Bloody Sacrifice in Christ, who condemns souls to Hell, who steals consciences,—who am not propitious to any except it be through saints and priests! O base lies! leading my sheep astray. Free thoughts of genius—my Voice speaking through men—is forbidden by these proud, insolent priests. Dogma and Form chain their congregations; Superstition supersedes Faith in Christ; Fear replaces Love—and when Love is gone, Discord reigns supreme. Woe to the usurpers of Truth! the propagators of Discord! Instead of words of truth and comfort from all altars are obstreperously spoken the words of Untruth—vile words exhorting money by irreligious threats

and calumnious lies. The Keys of Peter is their bait,—God's help is little needed,—the Saints help them to heaven, so the fish are told—O poor, little fish! I love you, love you! Woe betide the wretches that elect to follow My Messenger Christ,* but lead the fish to death, so that they may live on wine and fat stuff!—woe—woe to them. They make Hell, of which they love to speak,—not I. Beware of the fat, sleek, tricky creature, *the wolf in sheep's clothing*, the unbearably proud and extremely haughty priest! O little sheep, beware of him. Know ye that when you innocently confess to him he inwardly smiles at your primitive innocence, knowing that he is a greater wretch than you,—and hearing confession, he inwardly exults at his evil power. Beware of him who is fastidious in dress, but black in soul! Beware of him who seemingly fasts, but grows fat on the gastronomic living of a voracious gourmand! Beware of him who is humble to the Church, but who, following his superiors—bishops, cardinals, and popes—flaunts his pride in the face of the laity, for, as he audaciously claims, he is

* “The Pope has from time to time invested his surplus income in United States Government bonds, and the extent of his holdings of this sort is now estimated at 30,000,000 lire.”

Philadelphia Press.

“Beware of all covetousness!” “Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth.” “There was no room for them at the inn.” “The Son of man hath not where to lay His head.” FOLLOW ME . . .

When we enter a church and see such garmented “servants of Christ” and the glaring display of wealth, do we not hear from the church the most truthful, horrible, and demoniacal cry: *I know not the man!*

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higher than the angels!* Beware of him, little sheep; beware of his free will, it can't be stopped—O little sheep, beware! Priests, such as *ye are hypocrites! For ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; and ye neither go in yourselves, nor suffer them that are entering to go in.* Little sheep, can ye not see the sad discrepancy between the 'ministers of the Gospel' and the Son of God? *God is Love.* I love you, little sheep. Beware of them who love themselves!"

A vision is again shown me—a vision of a less gross crime, but none the less to be deplored and deprecated.

I am in a cold Sectarian church. It is Easter Sunday. The pulpit is of expensive make, but very bare,—no works of art, no messages of inspiration here raise one to God. Several huge palms stand about, many pots of Easter lilies also,—but these only seem out of place. A Bible is on the pulpit, and a map of Palestine is near the preacher. Nothing is here to recall God to us but a very ungod-like creature—the preacher. Crafty-eyed, cadaverous, with white hair, a tall, spare form, he stands forth to "*teach all nations, baptising them in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.*"

"Jehovah was displeased with man," he says, continuing a previously begun sermon. "Adam brought sin into man; hence the power of Christ was necessary to make man fit in grace to do pleasing works; of

* *Vide* Cardinal Gibbons's "Faith of Our Fathers," Ch. XXIX.

his own free will he was unable to approach God. He died for us—offered Jehovah His blood for us. Says St. Paul: ‘Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved. In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.’ Now, my dear friends”—his smooth voice is as the cooing of a dove—“you should get faith. Pray for faith, and faith will come to you. Faith is great—it leads us to Zion, beautiful Zion, where are golden streets, where asphodels grow by meandering streams of diamond dust. He died for us, and, as I said, He burst forth from the tomb to-day—the Risen God. His Rising proved His Godhead—His dominion over Hell. You must thank Him, for He saves you from Hell—Hell, the place of fiery punishment, made by God for the sinners whom He condemns. I showed you by the map where He rose. And after He arose He appeared to Mary. To Mary—a common woman! *Strange though it is*, He appeared to a woman, the sinner Mary. She did not recognize Him. She is a type of a Church of to-day. But unlike her, the Church I mean is full of devils; but like her, it does not recognize the Risen God. It worships images,* fondly believes in a vain place where souls work to Heaven,—whereas souls are for either Heaven or Hell, and then they don’t get to Heaven till the Judgment Day. Christ said to Mary after she

* The Catholics do not worship and pray to images.

knew Him, and in joy wanted to hug Him, '*Touch Me not!*' Why should He have said this—'*Touch—Me—not?*'" He pauses—"Because....it would have been indecorous in an unpardonable degree for a woman to embrace Him so early in the morning." His eyes almost close, his mouth purses, and he conventionally smiles. "And I may here say," he goes on—"incidentally say that the Church to which I alluded, would not have dared to kiss Him, too. He will say to it, '*Touch Me not.*' For it is corrupt, impure—you know it. Murder and lust and holy water it is founded on. Idolatry, bigotry, and indulgences are its doctrines. Indulgences were once sold from a wagon in Germany by a monk;—and—and"—his mouth purses with a delicious taste in it—"in the cellars of its nunneries have been found babies' bones!" He looks horrified, and sucks his "holey" (for they have not been filled) teeth. "*We* will rise with Him and repay the Papists as they do. Christ says, '*As ye mete it shall be meted unto you,*'—and hence we must mete to them as they mete to us. And this having sprung into my head—it is an act of God—I must admonish you. Many Protestant ladies profess a liking for holy water—a base, low, superstitious imposture. You say there is little comfort in our reformed religion—I have all my comfort in religion; it is my staff. The reason you do not find comfort here is because you have not been touched by God. *Ye must be born again!* ye want the renewing immersion of the fire of faith. You must get it—get it and rise with the risen Saviour. Get it by giving donations to the church, as

Christ gave Cæsar his dues. And do not let Mariolatry enter you; it is entering some of our churches. It is a fearful thing, a thing that the risen Saviour has nothing to do with. Why, in Austria the zealous Jesuits are printing pictures of Mary on paper and make the faithful partake of this Marian eucharist.* What has this to do with the Risen Lord? I tell you this out of charity. Like St. Paul, I am charitable; I wish to help you, my people——” His soft voice falls into an exquisite wail. “My people—my friends, we are brothers; we must help one another. Christ offered His blood as a ransom for us—we must offer our blood for Him. Good Father Roman of St. Mary’s told me that his sodality does immense good. Now if the sodality of a Roman Church does good, how much more will not our societies do good! To have us do good, Jesus rose.

“And Jesus rose from the dead, as we shall rise from the dead—as we shall rise gloriously if we have faith in Him—in Him—only in Him. His life in society was decorous; His death offered God a pleasing sacrifice. From Him we can draw lessons: be pure when He calls us; be as pure as we can—of course we can’t be perfectly pure, no mortal can; be faithful—slander not the minister of the Gospel; be charitable—give money to Foreign Missions, and also to the Poor Fund—I get only ten per cent. of that, the Poor gets ninety per cent.; read good literature—if the critics condemn a book, don’t read it;—be good thus, and you shall rise as He rose, and ye too will not be recognized

* This is said to be a fact.

by your enemies in Hell, as the Messiah was not recognized by Mary. Coming into Church, you all see the beautiful, stained-glass window given by Mrs. Van Buren, to whom we extend our thanks. It would be a good idea for you to put other 'memorial' windows in to replace those common ones; it will help to beautify this sacred temple of God. On the window given by Mrs. Van Buren you can see the Risen God! is He not fair?

"What is nicer," he says, after a short pause, "than on entering a temple of God on the Sabbath to see symbolic pictures, recalling to us His life? Nothing pleases God more than to decorate His earthly habitation nothing. He wants to be worshiped in beautiful, gorgeous places—He is beautiful, hence, instead of taking the 'sermons in stones' in the forest, we should take the sermons of His ministers in fine churches. The Sabbath is a holy day, and we should spend it in a holy place—not in a park, where the young girl winks to the fellow and the fellow winks back. This sickening act of Sunday amusement is to be deplored. Surely the Saviour did not, does not, rise to these vile, lost persons. Let them run their race—in the park, and then they'll awaken to the sad fact that Hell is their reward of breaking the Sabbath. He rose on the Sabbath, and the Sabbath should be kept—by going to church, resting, eating little, and praying. Do no work, for no sin is more displeasing to God than breaking His day of rest."

Thus he goes on in this tiresome, insipid strain, telling inane platitudes that lead more to Hell than

to Heaven. His preaching of the Resurrection has in it no fervor; occasionally he consults the Bible or the Map; otherwise he is an impassive automaton of emptiness. Several trite hymns are sung—hymns more disgusting than the Pagan songs—hymns mostly written by clergymen who compile a lot of silly words and call it “sacred music”—hymns called by number.

Concludingly the preacher says:

“Let every child come to Sunday School; it will be given some eggs—the children must have some Easter.”

The congregation goes home; it draws no lesson from his sermon; every Sunday it is the same. They are tired with society's *ennui*; they flatter the preacher when they see him, have him dine with them; but on Sundays they have patience to listen for the sake of “Dame Grundy.” They are lazy sheep in a meadow; the shepherd is cold; they rise no higher, have no aims higher than those of a barnyard fowl.

A Voice I hear saying:

“Little sheep, lead down to Hell! Little sheep, why do ye not leave the sluggard of the Gospel, and go to find Faith in Me through Nature:—the flower proclaimed Me more than does he. Hypocrite, excellent adulterer, flatterer, and society favorite, what thinks He of Christ? He preaches of a sulphurous Hell, makes his sheep hate other flocks. O wretches of coldness, *because iniquity shall abound the love of many shall wax cold!* Sectarianism, dissension, dissimulation, in one word—Lie, why discard the miracles and comforts of Christ, why not teach of the God

in Man with love? Why fight over vain symbols? Why let the vital truths become lost? Why make Me a merciless God, of My will condemning souls to a place of Hell? Why do ye not teach of the Model as a God, not as an Institutor of quarrelsome sects? Why do ye not with love and purity preach Truth and lead the sheep upwards by Spiritual Light, instead of inundating them with Materialism? If they loved and followed Him, temperance societies and their gossiping votaries would be replaced by men who would save the poor? O bad ministers, unscrupulous hypocrites, elaborate liars, you do not teach all nations, living in poverty with Christ, loving and converting your enemies—*Woe to you, because you are as sepulchers that appear not, and men that walk over and are not aware!* Love one another as I have loved you, and work not for personal, temporal advancement,—for it is easier for a camel to pass through a needle's eye to Heaven than it is for you."

I am in the clergyman's study—the clergyman portrayed in the preceding vision. He sits by his desk, whereon is a bottle of cogniac. Ever and anon taking a swallow, he reads from an unexpurgated edition some of the low, vile, pandering tales of Boccaccio. Gloating with inward joy at the pages, he exults in the pictures he conjures before him. "As wise as a serpent, as harmless as a dove?" No, a wretch of veiled turpitude, who knows not Duty. On the desk is a Bible, paper, pen and ink. He has just finished "preparing" next Sunday's sermon,—regardless that Christ commands His followers to speak without forethought,

but by the Holy Ghost. His sermon is a rhapsodical disquisition on "Marriage." I read a part of this inane tract—lies from beginning to end.

" ' This is now the bone of thy bones, the flesh of thy flesh '—two in material flesh, between whom all is love, felicity, never sin. Adam and Eve—" and he gives a tiresome résumé of the " wedding of Adam and Eve." " Marriage is a ceremony performed by God's minister," he says, " making two bodies one, to cohabit, to love, to be faithful unto death. No marriage can be contracted while one of the pair lives, except by legal divorce, which breaks marriage (and this said divorce must be given only on solid ground) ; and then one is free. Death is also a release, and the party may marry again without sin, believing in God, helped to grace by the blood of Christ, and remain pure. Man must earn his bread by the sweat of his brow, be the ruler of the home, the manipulator of his business and the father of his children; the woman must in all be submission to the Man, serve and love him, and be saved as St. Paul says by child-bearing—" and so on.

That vision passes. (And I may here remark that such untruths are believed by the majority of Christians to-day. Let a woman marry, revel in lust, then get a divorce so that she may get another man with whom to pander to vice, she is still " respectable." Let an unmarried girl do this same thing,—she is an outcast. But so long as vice is concealed under a " sacrament " performed by a minister—which is no marriage at all, but merely a blarney of words—it is not called sin. There is but one sinless Marriage, that of the Soul; there is

but one Love of Affinity. And any other marriage than this, no matter whether legal or church contraction makes it "right" in the eyes of the world, to God it is nothing more than a life of sinful, vulgar lust. And the demirep that sells herself for a gold piece is of the same level as the fair divorcee, who knows not the meaning of Marriage, of Spiritual Love.)

The next vision which I shall narrate is one seemingly pure and nice, but extremely vile and low, vicious and degenerate.

I am in a drawing-room, at a grand ball. Many ladies are there, dressed in robes of fine silk, Irish and Honiton laces, and glittering jewels. To demonstrate the lowness of this place, I show a beautiful woman and a man. They are seated under some palm trees, secluded from sight. She is a married woman, of the ultra-fashionable class. He is a "gentleman," and although on him gleam many first-water, adamantine diamonds, he owes considerable money to a certain "friend"—a money-lender.

"Blanche," says he, "will you do what you say?"

"Cert, old boy," she replies, "after Gerald goes to Del's—you know he's going to a supper there to-morrow night—then you may come. I shall be at home to you."

"O you sweet thing," he mutters, and he places his arm about her slender waist; "what shall we do in that long evening?"

"We shall talk—repeat the worn-out tales of conventionality—sing—"

"And love,"—he smiles.

"Love,—" she replies—"we shall have a scrumptious time—ha—ha—ha! Bully!"

"And get dead drunk—"

"No," she says, shaking her golden head, "Gerald will be home by three, and if he should discover you—"

"Wouldn't there be a rumpus!" he laughs.

"I wouldn't care what there would be for my part," she innocently says, "but for you—how I care for you!"

"Ah," says he, taking her delicate palm in his, "you are a 'jollier!' You know you told Dude the same thing when he run you."

She does not answer him. A frown crosses her mobile face, and she hastily withdraws her arm from his in sullen petulance.

"Are you cross, Blanche?" He winks to himself.

No reply.

"You devil!" And he seizes her face and fondly kisses her full, red lips.

"God!" She springs up. The hostess, a wealthy lady of the select coterie, looks at them. She heard the loud report of the kiss and looks to see—pulling aside a large palm leaf.

"Pardon me," she mutters, and walks away.

The guilty pair gaze at each other in strained silence. Then the lover says:

"She won't say anything, Blanche; for she knows I'm on to *her*."

"What do you know about her?" inquires Blanche, excitedly.

"Ah——"

"Please do tell me."

"What will you give me?"

"Myself"—sweetly.

"O, get out; I had you already; cheap at——"

"A kiss—give me another."

He kisses her, softly this time.

"Blanche—have—you—ten—in cash?"

"No, not here," she replies, "but—to-morrow eve—tell me what you know about her!"

"To-morrow night."

They leave; evil thoughts stain their minds—low, bestial thoughts.

I pass into the private room of a lady. Gorgeous, with every luxury, it really is a sumptuous place.

By a table, on which is champagne, fruits, cards, and a chafing-dish, are three women and two men. All worthy satellites of society—women who figure largely in the journals, lauded up by pandering journalists. They freely partake of the wine, play cards, and their conversation is immoral in the vilest degree.

"Mrs. Lynn," says one of the gentlemen to his partner, "are you sure your husband won't be back from the club till two?"

"Yes, love," she replies, laughing, "you seem to care a great deal for your precious skin."

"Indeed I do, friends," he replies—"it's the only pretty thing on me, and I can't use powder with the skill of Mrs. Lynn."

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"Why, you're a liar, Pete," shrieks Mrs. Lynn, "you never saw me using powder."

"Remember the night I called—was shown to your room by the servant whom you pay to keep mum—you were applying the costly——"

"Shut up—ah!"

The door opens. A tall, sleek, sanctimonious-looking man enters.

"Rev. Seawell!"

They arise with champagne glasses full, and "To the health of our good pastor," drink. He bows obsequiously.

"The reason I am so late," he explains, "is because I had a heated altercation with a Catholic priest down town. I'll give him a heat in my sermon next Sunday,—and suppose I preach on you evil sinners—your 'leprosy' would form a theme for a sound, *risque* sermon."

"You monkey—" shouts the youngest woman, and she suddenly fires a full glass of champagne at him.

It misses his blandly smiling countenance, and breaks on a vase of rare Etruscan ware.

"Repay me—offer reparation," he says, sternly.

"My lord," she says, and blushes—for she had entered society only this season, and was "fresh,"—"kiss me."

He omnivorously kisses this slim, sweet girl, and taking his face from hers, she spits—spits on his bearded face. He utters a curse, and tears suffuse his soft blue eyes.

"Just wait," he replies, wiping the spit off his soiled

face, "I shall have revenge. When you're married and have a swarm of your progeny about you,—then I'll say—I tell 'em that their respectable ma gambled, swore, drank, and was the better-half—temporarily—of a preacher."

"Do," she replies, laughing gaily, "but you won't have the chance."

"Why?" he inquires, his eyes opening wide.

"Because,"—and she fires a banana skin at him.

They proceed to progressive euchre and other amusements, drinking freely, laughing uproariously, ejaculating dates, stones, and glasses of champagne at one another, enjoying the joys of a private "at home."

"If my husband should see me—" suggests Mrs. Lynn, sneering.

"—And my wife!" says the Rev. gentleman, and a look of meekness passes over his protean face.

"And my fiancée—" says the partner of the other married woman, hilariously laughing.

"Well, I've no one to fear but aunty," says Miss Newest, the partner of the "minister of Christ."

"Isn't that perfectly lovely—ha-ha-ha!"

"One more round of 'the boy,' and then we'll have another game of euchre," says Mrs. Bigman—"I'll be the stake—Ha-ha-ha!"

They drink, excellent props of society, drinking the drink of the gods—the gods of evil—evil of society, high society. A true picture of social strumpets who pose to the world as moral!

What a retrogression of man! How much lower than the beasts! How vain for such is the grand

Christian faith; yet who is the cause of this retrograded humanity? Sternly comes the reply:—The derelict ministers of the Gospel, the Pharisees of the new but falling Jerusalem. Hence I, who witnessed the Child's sorrow, say, as He did—WATCH.

I have related out of these quickly passing kinetoscopic visions what I think the people of to-day may take to heart. Now is the time, when Evil is almost plenipotent, when Good is almost subservient to Evil. Let all take warning! Let all hear the voice of one who loves God—a spirit of His Kingdom.

And after seeing these horrific visions of coming deeds, in which evil men fell into darkness, I awoke to mortal existence. And after awaking, I knew not the meaning of those visions—visions which the Holy Child saw in sad love—but now I know; now I give the world the benefit of my knowing.

The then almost unintelligible visions faded,.... darkness ensued,....I was in the stable before this incarnated God. I somewhat comprehended why He so dolorously cried, but I did not fully realize why. The Child Divine moaned and wailed in His pristine grief,His little heart seemed torn in the conflict of sorrow and pain,....yet through His tears He smiled—a sweetly happy smile,....but—my baby began to sob, fret, and cry; superstitious awe overwhelmed me, for it was so strange—*so awful!* And a sudden timorous fear coming over me, I turned on my heel and ran, ran—I ran from the stable in a dubious, fearful mood. Yet in me there was a glorious happiness! oh, so sweet!....

CHAPTER V.

THE TEMPTING OF SATAN.

WHAT a grand, resplendent panorama did I see!—the sun was rising in the east; the incipient pearly dawn was visible. Yet this panorama of brilliant sunshine and glory was as naught compared with the Panorama of the Divine, which I had lately seen. Northwest of me was the town of Bethlehem, south of me lay a path leading off to the lone and dreary canyons.

The sun was rising; beneath him was a daïs of yellow, silvery clouds. Colossal billows of golden grandeur sailed majestically, like triumphant kings returning from high conquest, in the field of burning azure. I had run from the stable, had slowly traveled several hours, and now the sun was risen. My heart was beating fearfully and apprehensively, a lump, a gasping contraction, arose in my throat and choked my utterance. And gazing upward, towards the shining sun of brilliancy, I saw a grand Figure come between the sun and the earth, . . . it grew dark, . . . the Figure came sweeping down, . . . and a terrific roar of menacing thunder vibrated with a ghastly and pre-natural resonance on the heretofore still air. The Figure, whose luminous countenance shone as living flame,

on pinions of darkness . . . came descending downwards, the thunder roaring and clattering all the while! I closed my eyes. What terrible apparition was this? Was I dreaming? What wonderful things were happening to me! Suddenly there was a blinding flare of scarlet flame. . . . a rush and sound of sable wings beating on the air, . . . and a vague darkness fell around the earth! But before me . . . grand, supremely beautiful, terribly sad and care-worn, stood . . . he whom I had seen in the stable. A terrible fear conclusively clutched at my heart! . . . would I die? . . . was he here to claim my soul? . . . “*Christ—CHRIST,*” I muttered. He was my only Hope, my only Succor.

“What a sweet Name!” said this beautiful being before me, rapturously and reverently,—“A Name that causes the devils to hope; a Name that will perhaps be my salvation,—causing me to cease to toil,—to work,—and to suffer! . . . oh! oh God, Father of Justice, I would that I were once again in Heaven! Seldom do I see that Loving Countenance of Glory Divine, . . . now, because He is in Man’s form, because hateful Man goes to Him, because I can follow Man, . . . *now* I can often see Him! What a Food to my hungry, wicked Soul! What a light is the Smile of that One Face! . . . O Man, I *must* tempt,—’tis my self-imposed work in penalty for my unrepented sin,—’tis my punishment. When out of Heaven I was cast, I let hate enter me, and I resolved to be man’s enemy. That resolve hate makes me keep,—and keeping it I—O God—God!—suffer. . . . I am as it were a rod in His

hand,—and when I whip others I am also being whipped. O terrible, self-compelled task . . . My will was set, and now it acts; and in my hate of cursed mankind, I, out of envy and evil tempt,—for that mean, vile, earthly worm has chances that I have not—” And he trembled and swayed to and fro in rage, terrific hate, and pain. “Ah, how delicious it is to ruin the soul of a man,” he went on; “how awful the sequent burden of horrific pain I incur upon myself! I love yet dread to tempt. . . . I am a miserable paradox! O God, what a fate is mine!” And bitter tears rolled out of those inhuman eyes. A clammy sweat of agony was upon his face; a sad, satirical smile passed over that countenance; and a terrible agony caused him to compress his lips. As though he had a hard task to do and wished, yet did not wish to do it, hated to do it, loathed it—he slowly came down to earth. The sun rose up and flamed behind him, seemingly a coronal of flame. Then the clouds on which he had come vanished, and he was there as if he were only human. Wickedly beautiful was this half Angel-Devil, half Man. All definite thoughts left my mind. I felt as though I were an anomalous, brainless, distraught creature; only fear was upon me for this sad, angry Creature of Darkness. Suddenly he said:

“Dost thou love Jardac? *If so, dost thou wish him to return to thee?*”

I became aroused from my temporary stupor;—and in amazed, hopeful consternation, I cried:

“Love—love Jardac—Jardac! Jardac come back! Jardac!”

“I see that thou art too sanctified to love that voluptuary still,” he said ironically, and a look of joy and hate intermingled caused him to grit his teeth,—“Yes; *there is no hope for me! I must, . . . she will!* God, oh, oh!” This was a long, quivering wail—a wordless appeal for pity, for compassion, as it were.

“Wilt thou have him to sin with,” he asked, and I trembled,—for his face was clouded and his voice was as sepulchral thunder—he went on,—“after seeing thy God who in His infinite Love comes to save thee?”

“Jardac—may I have him?” I faltered. My old passion—as a fanned fire—revived; . . . I was surely forgetting God. O perfidy of humanity!

“Canst thou have him!—if God permit, if thou art not hurled into outer Darkness ere thou gettest the joy of lust!” said he, wistfully. “Thou art given a great ray of Hope,—thou hast friends in Heaven who pray for thee,—thou hast seen One whose Birth is a joy to fiends, a glory to angels! Thou hast been pardoned,—and now, now thou wilt not resist mine evil influence and suggestions,—thou dost jump to sin with an alacrity that emulates that of a demon. Thou art a true type of that contorted wretch—Mankind. Creatures of slime, why does God shower all His choice blessings on you,—while I—I—I—*cannot* cease hating you; you—evil men and women, make me hate you,—and hating you I love to harm you,—and harming you I harm myself,—and this makes me hate you all the more. . . . Oh—oh—I long for Heaven! I cannot enter there to stay, oh, God! I cannot repent, for Evil I love—I love to bestow sorrow and evil on you,

men and women—for it gratifies my hate—hate because your submitting to me makes me more retrograded, more miserable! O miserable woe! O Darkness of the Dominion of Sin! If I would repent, I could enter Heaven. O the joy!—but you will not let me, you will not cease to listen to me. O the futility of the God-Man's life! Few recognize the sensitive rising or falling of the Soul! few study the exactitude, the scientific precision of the growth and the retrogression of the Soul! O Souls of Men, I hate, abhor, despise you! Easily led, I love to lead you; I hate you for submitting,—for your submission makes my pain; yet I exult to see you sin, love to see your pain;—yet I hate you with a malignant hate because your sinning makes me more ungodly. O, pusilanimous, sophisticated, mean, low, vile, cringing, impure fools! But by thee, O Man, I can see Perfect Love." At the utterance of this last expression his throat swelled with joy, but he heaved a heavy sigh.

"Creature of dirt," he went on,—“I am an artist; let me paint a picture for thee. Close thine eyes of lasciviousness, and in spite of my soul-torturing lassitude, I'll paint thee a picture as things *perhaps* will be”....He extended his dark, wan hands over me; his eyes became fiery. I closed my hurting eyes . . . and saw—Oh, what did I see?

I see a grove of green and fruitful orange trees; the luscious mellow, yellow fruit hangs ready to be plucked. The viridescent grass is long and luxuriant. A translucent stream of cold, refreshing water runs merrily along. A sweet scent is wafted on the warm,

redolent zephyr-wind. The deep azure sky begins to darken ominously, and then—a peal of entrancing music bursts upon the air. Two figures....emerge from a shady, sequestered nook—the virile figure of a handsome man and....the flawless, lovely form of a young girl....They rapturously, languorously clasp each other, separate, gracefully bow, join hands, pirouette, and....fly off in a whirling maze of delirious gyrations. Roses bend from umbrageous trees to kiss them; sweet odors blow by them on the wind.... “This shall last forever,” the man amorously whispers, gloating at the girl with a transporting smile of light, mixed with evil desire, soon to be gratified. Then.... a lurid ball of crimson fire writhes across the sable vault of heaven, which suddenly grew very dark; fiendish faces peer maliciously and enviously at these two—I hear the Fallen Angel’s voice....the phantasmagoric scene rolls up and melts away.

“Dost thou will that that should be?” he asked, sternly.

I hesitated. The two figures in that vivid picture were Jardac and I!....I remembered Christ.

“Don’t think of Him if thou will’st that that should be,” interposed Satan, frowning.

Had I not lately repented of my sins? Was not God’s powerful grace upon me? Yes; but the vision evoked all evil in me, and mixing with my love, in spite of my lately acquired graces, caused me to wish for that. I cried:

“Yes! yes!....give me Jardac—my lover....Jardac.”

"Foul vampire of the mundane hades—Beware!" cried this Angel-Foe, "I warn thee; thou dost sin of thine own option! Hence—*Beware!* As this God-Man is born, if He live many will be saved from pain. My hate of Man makes me long for His death, for I will not that men should be saved. Every infinitesimal sin of men sinks me lower in hell,—I sink in pain according to the enormity of the sin. Oh, I dread—dread the fulfillment of this temptation! Vainly methought thou wouldst spurn me,—but I shall make thee—O vagaries of Man! Dost thou acquiesce to do my work, to be my aid, to—get the desires of thy base heart? Wilt thou serve Ego and Lust—and then die?"

A mystery was he. I did not comprehend this mysterious Spirit of Evil. I tried to suppress the sweet image of the Divine which irrepressibly rose with exasperating persistency before me. I would again have Jardac; my love for Christ and baby was nothing compared with my love of him.

"What wilt thou that I do," I eagerly cried, as one in a dream.

"When I have left thee," he said, with a rolling of his flaming eyes, "a colt will pass thee. Mount it with the outcome of thy unlawful love; it will carry thee to Bethlehem. Give the child to a woman whom thou wilt see in the doorway of a house of fresh mud, with a roof of white, and give her this." And he practically gave me a sort of porte-monnaie, wherein were some gold shekels. "That will open her heart—all men love that all-powerful god! The

beast will ride thee to Jerusalem. Follow instinct, and I will lead thee to Herod. I shall use my power,—for it is powerful over those under me, those of the Dominion of Sin,—and thou wilt be alone before him. Just let me make a man think of a plan whereby he may benefit himself—and, presto!....he runs! Ha-ha! Man furnishes me with innocent amusement! Ha-ha-ha!”

There was a shuddering bitterness in this uproarious laughter,—and....as he ceased....a million frozen tongues seemed to take up the sound....and....wild weeping, harrowing cries, shrill, sepulchral laughs and plaintive, pitiful moans echoed about me....and in it all—there was hoarsely whispered:

“*Gloria in excelsis—Deo*”....and there came a subdued but prolonged roar of dull thunder.

“AND ON EARTH....EVIL TO MAN,” cried Satan. “Evil—evil—evil to man....evil—evil to....to....man,” was echoed again and again.

“Evil to men—to men . . .” and there was a sound of dolorous sobbing.

“When,” continued Satan, “thou art before Herod, quietly obey my servants who well serve thee,—then dance—dance like a houri! Methinks thou wilt be irresistible. Old voluptuary that he is, in spite of his seventy years, he will long for thee,—excellent man. But seduce him,....tell him thou wilt be his as the recognized mistress of a *king*, but tell him that he is not king, as there is born the Christ, the Infant of Love, the true King of the Jews. Tell him that thine aim is to be the esteemed favorite of a great king; that

He shall prove his kingship by slaying the newly born King. Tempt him well; I shall aid thee,—for my thought-vibrations find a reflex in evil men. Circumstances will prove to him the veracity of your statement; he will fear. This fear, mixed with his desire of you, will be perfect in having the Child—or all children—killed. He will be helped by his followers—my workers—the Herodians. I will aid thee,—yet my power is naught compared with an evil but beautiful woman's in making Man an Animal. Thou canst feed his kingly fears,—thy graceful body will be a most delightful snare. To possess thee, and at the same time to keep his throne, he will do evil—aye, vast evil—and when he has proved himself undisputed king and claims thee—”

“—Must I be his!” I cried in pained apprehension; for none other than Jardac should possess me.

“No; thou will be in another's power.” He smiled—sardonically, meaningly. But I seemed to be mesmerized.

“Jardac's,” I rapturously cried, “I shall be his.” The delightful anticipation was inexpressibly sweet.

I thought not of the heinous enormity of the sin contemplated. I began to feel a doubt of him; his smile seemed deep, untrue.

“How do I know,” I inquired, “that thou wilt keep thy promises—I know thou lovest evil, Satan,—but—”

“I keep all promises.”

“Hast thou the power,” I asked, and an inward instinct made me tremble.

“Have I the power?” he wailed,—“I was once an

angel in God's bright Heaven. Ask me whether I have power. I have power in the Dominion of Sin; I have power over him who obeys my voice;—but I have no power in the circle of Christ, over those who are pure. I can make the pure suffer by my human votaries,—but I cannot make them do a sin! In this dreadful Dominion of Sin, where unrepentant souls are like to me, I have power; and even here....my power is subordinate to God's. I **am** wicked,—oh, if you mortals would only fear me, overcome me, then I could begin to cease to hate—but....*terrible is the Law of self-working Justice!* At the sight of Infant's tears thou dost become affrighted and dost run away, while to me—I shall show thee my power."

And then . . . he cried commandingly, in a loud resonant voice:

"Devils in the clouds, come with infernal blackness and darkness and material clouds, and lift us up, and carry us into the mountains of Judea,—by the power of Spirit over all Matter."

Then....the sky darkened, and tempestuous roaring clouds came rolling along,....carrying us up,....away! Through the thunder-roaring air we sped! My baby cried and frantically tried to jump from my arms! A terrible heat was about us; intense darkness was over me. Invisible hands bore us along!

A minute more—we were on earth again, on a snow-covered mountain of Judea. It was wintry cold, and darkness was about us.

"See these snow-covered plains!—Spirits of Evil in the earth, do as I desire: cause the earth to rise and

fall,—cause lava to flow and melt the snow,—cause the earth to crumble and roar, that the sinner may know my power!” At this terrific command, I heard a thunderous crash, . . . the snow-covered earth rocked and hove like a billowy sea....O terror! in the distance....the earth tremendously yawned open like the gates of a hell. Lava and smoke poured out,.... the snow melting....the heat burning! I was paralyzed with fear, I was crazed—distracted—from mute horror. A tremulous fear for Satan came over me. Presently the fire receding into the chasm, there ensued a spluttering of crackling sparks,.... and with a tremendous, resounding clap, the huge, ignivomous gap closed, and closing, threw stones high up into the impenetrable darkness of the air.

“Dost thou see my power?” he queried, strangely—
“the dominance of Spirit over Material?”

“Yes! yes!....take me away?” I cried, regaining speech; for horrified terror was causing me to shrink and violently tremble.

“No!” cried he vindictively and triumphantly, “Thou shalt suffer and see.” And he strangely waved his arms in the air, muttering some incoherent words. At this a serpentine form of gold and crimson fire leaped and writhed athwart the sky,....fiery forks of blue flame played about him . . . and he rose! A stifling, luminous vapor enveloped us—and in this a pre-natural star suddenly appeared behind him, blazing and brilliant. He extended his arms,....he seemed like some martyr dying, the star showing with fearful distinctness his scowling yet sad face, his

dark, agonized rolling eyes, his grand, imposing form And suddenly millions of stars appeared in the heavens and formed themselves into the Form of a Cross,—the Sign I had lately seen,—and it stood immovable in the black chaos of the frowning skies. Although a sweet pang struck me, yet I did not even partially relent.

“Ah! Ye devils! my power moveth her not,—let her see me in a part of my hellish glory!”

As these words with brazen distinctness echoed in the air, a mystic brilliancy grew behind him, causing the star to dissolve and fade away. It was like a golden sun,....and, blazing, burning, it arose, he before it. Higher!....Black, white, fiery wings of dual shape flapped and whirled in the air,....a million hissing balls of sulphurous blue flame writhed lam-bently about him,....anon!....a crowd of exquisite maidens, whose forms gathered substance in fire, appeared around him,—in their eyes was an inexpressible, almost unendurable woe. They seemed to worship him, bending low in misery and shame. Wild music surged tempestuously in the air—such mad music!....a minor wail, developing into a lascivious, hilarious tune—oh, grand!—I thrilled with sad emotion and horrified pleasure. This strange extravaganza continued, rising higher, a glory to devils! And after a little while he who stood before the blazing background of amber fire, about whom hissed and whirled fiery balls of blue—now again argentine—flame,—who looked imperiously wronged, woefully sad, justly malicious, said—said he in a warning tone:

“These souls of misery were such as thou!....Show

her your misery, ye impure, accursed servers in my kingdom,"—said he to them with a glance of loathing.

No words did they utter, but they looked at me—I cannot pen or depict the terrible woe, the awful despair, the sense of gnawing loss, and the supernatural hypochondria which looked at me. They were all fair and beautiful, but repulsive in their degenerate and deplorable fate. Unprecedentedly some other spirits—men of sad beauty, but ugly in their sin—appeared. Each one was with one of these damned spirit-creatures,....a blinding flare of fire shot around them, forming a circle around the King, in which were these doomed souls of men and women. They gazed at each other with a look of tortured malignancy and sad reproach, and memory stung with its keenest sting. A pitiful, desolate, debased love was their portion. Oh, how they wrung their hands and groaned! The scene was bitter, terrifying, and decidedly repulsive to me. Satan exultantly cried:

"Devils, lift me up! Angels, draw me high . . . I wish to rise to Heaven!...." And the tender love, the great hope which shone from his eyes was as from heaven.

Then the damned souls, exemplaries of sin and its results, disappeared,....the music in a wail died away,—in their sin hellish leers and railing blasphemies—for one instant pealed in the air. With a howl—a musical howl of joy and pain—he began to rise. High!....higher!....with the swiftness of lightning, amid the resonant and deafening din of ceaseless, sullen thunder,....he rose on pinions of black clouds,

surrounded by glowing fire and lambent flame, essaying to rise to Heaven! He was transfigured in light.

“Ye gods of old! ye are blest in not being; for if you ever were and were doomed, you think that oblivion and non-existence are better. Hope and Glory!I have been before the true Infant of Love. He bade me have hope; and in this hope, of mine inherent power, I assume and risk to rise. Into hell all ye devils of earth!Ye made me suffer,—’tis no phantasm, but a horrid, hideous, arrant truth. And thy world even Christ will fail to regenerate. Emancipate me, O God!and let that maudlin sphere—a blot on the escutcheon of spheres—go to be destroyed. Take Thy precious Love from it,—it cares not for Thy Love. To work, Azazel, to work! I live in the present!I assume to rise!” and he smiled,—and a grand joy irradiated his face.

Higher!did devil ever soar so high?My strained vision could hardly discern that glorious figure in the sky. Back of him blazed that mystic shield-like disc of radiance,the vortiginous balls of blue sulphurous flame shot about his gigantic form. Up!up!into the Cross of meteors and stars sailed he!then——

A blinding, terrible, unexpected Blaze dazzling illumined the darkness,—an Angel came down from Heaven! On blinding, flaring pinions of gold, azure, and pink clouds, in a fiery chariot of spluttering, prismatic, and iridescent flame, drawn by eight horses of perfect form, fiery and sublimely beautiful, came he, holding aloof a sword of terrifying menace. It was of red, writhing fire, and in letters dark were on it the

words: "WILL BARS THE GATES." I reeled—the scene was terrible! Satan gave him a look of hate—of terror!....an awful tremor seized him. All the hope on his face instantly froze,....the glory around him faded away—he began to fall!

"Mikayl, thou art fair and powerful," I, as in a dream, faintly heard Satan temptingly say; "and thou shouldst lift me up by love—"

"Begone, once beloved," said the Angel, sternly, "thy time is not yet. Thou art now unfit, by tempting man, for Heaven. By the Will Supreme, depart thou, and fulfill thine accursed hate, and suffer thy self-inflicted pains. Tempt me not!"

Down,....down....into the darkness of things profound!....As by a superior power he faded from me. Mikayl with sword aloof, 'mid fiery splendor, re-entered the Kingdom of Light and Glory, which from its foundation is destined to live forever for the souls who live in life as they should. An opalescent haze remained in the air. Something came over me, overwhelming me with terror and fear. And I ran—ran—ran, propelled onward by a prolific Force invisible. Onward I went . . . "Jardac," was my only invoking cry. Him only I wanted, in spite of terror, in spite of Hell itself. The warnings I did not heed;—I wronged myself, stained my soul, also hurt one whose burden is very hard to bear—yet for my passions he was not spared.

The allegorical vision and Satan were gone; the sun brightly shone. It somewhat bewildered me,—but onwards I ran. I felt strange; I felt as if I were under

the influence of an evil dream. As Satan had said, I met a colt. It carried me to Bethlehem, and then, at a newly built house, I gave the child and the money to a pious-looking woman who agreed to care for it, but who seemed suspicious of me. Anyway, I left her. The wise, well-informed colt of its own guidance rode me to Jerusalem. The sun rose higher; a beautiful, sparkling, exhilarating morn was this, a morning that I shall never forget; a morn in which I saw Salvation; a morn in which, in a glamour of passion, I forsook Jesus and Goodness to win—Jardac; and the winning I knew meant sin. I regretted to part from baby—but—Jardac!!! I felt as if I were under a spell.

And I was. And what spell is more pernicious than the spell of sin! What power is more luring to bad deeds than that of a beautiful woman! Truly the power of sexual attraction causes more sad evil than the direct influence of Satan. Truly the words, "*Will bars the gates,*" are very true. *Will* closes heaven, opens hell: my will caused me all my awful, racking pain. It is the Will of men To-day that makes Evil,—and Hell.

Onwards I rode,....in the path leading to—sin. The fruit of that mission as chronicled down, and to the end of time will proclaim Herod a merciless murderer, but which in reality was caused by the tempting glance of a woman's eye, the exquisite contour of a woman's form, the dazzling fairness of a woman's face. And this tragedy of Bethlehem—caused by a woman—that woman I—in the sacred Name of Love—is written up in nature's Books of Record, and placed in the archives of God for all eternity,—to all time. And it is

a proof of man's base passion, which in his peccability he blasphemes by presuming to call it—*Love*; it is a proof of the joy and sorrow of Satan in evil, and the sorrow mortals incur upon themselves by Sin. I speak in knowing;—as Christ did, so did I see Satan “as lightning descending from Heaven.”

AUTHOR'S NOTE.—The Author is indebted to that eminent authoress, Miss Marie Corelli, for some of his knowledge of Satan, and he also sincerely thanks the authoress in question for the help he obtained from her writings in spiritual study.

T. E. H.

CHAPTER VI.

THE TEMPTATION OF HEROD.

I WAS a votary of Satan. Days seemed to pass, yet I went on! At length, after what seemed to be an interminable journey, I passed a gate,....on....on! I dismounted, and instinctively walked onward, onward! Darkness was upon me. On....a blaze of flaring light—a hum of voices: I was in a room of the palace of Herod, on Zion.

‘Twas a large and exceptionally richly furnished room. Many gorgeously dressed personages were before the old voluptuary on a throne. Many colored lights illumined the apartment, and a red light shining on his painted face and dyed hair, caused a feeling of repugnance to repel me. I would run away,....but no! Jardac rose before me: I saw his masterful, magnificent face, his thick, red, honeyed lips, his deep, fiery, passionate eyes so dark, his thick, clustering hair—hair that it had been my joy to fondle and caress;—I saw his herculean form, in the clasp of which my heart had trembled! In spite of his arrant cruelty, his base hard-heartedness, I loved him still. Any cost would I pay to win him!....only to have him amorously clasp me once more in those muscular arms of steel!—only once more to have him

impart some of that intoxicating honey from his exquisite lips to mine!—only once more to fondle his beautiful, silken hair!—only once more to feel the hot warmth of snowy bosoms! to feel the maddening beat of heart against heart!—only once more to revel in the witching orgies of a wild, frantic love!....to unite passion and sin! to mingle heated pants with warm breath!—only once more to cling—cling, in spite of the leering devils of hell, in the face of the Terrors of Surrounding Darkness, in spite of Judgment and Death, under the gaze of sad spirits' eyes!—only once more to endure the exquisite, tingling pains of hell, only once more to change pure heaven to a Bloody Desolation!—only to do this, to love in the unrestrained, passionate, wild way, oblivious of the sacrilege of love on the Altars of Lust! Only to do this—to drink till drunk with the bitter-sweet wine,—to drown in the turbulent stream of mad realization,—to wander in the tempestuous storm of gratified temptation—only this, and.... then I could in rapturous fire die—What would then become of me, I dared not think.

As the "King of Darkness" had said, the assembled persons, adulating satellites of Herod, with an obeisance to their King, left the apartment. I was then alone before the King. He did not see me,—he was absorbed in contemplation and perplexing thought, his thick eyelids shut.

Suddenly....a dark-skinned man, utterly bare save for a girdle tied across his loins, came to me. He had dark, evil, sinister, sly eyes—eyes that seemed as glazed, translucent gates, behind which burned fearful

fires! With a supercilious smile, he handed me a shimmering garment.—“God!” I ejaculated, . . . for it was the same one that I had worn when I had first been in Jardac’s house! I turned to question this dark, mysterious personage—but *where was he?* He was gone! . . . as quickly as the lightning flies athwart the heavens, so quickly he seemed to disappear. While standing thus in stupefaction, a sweet euphony sounded in the air. Herod with a start and a frown looked towards me—he shut his eyes, . . . no, *he* did not close them, but Another caused him to remain immovably deaf and mute, by engrossing his mind with evil thoughts. Then four gaudily-dressed children with cherubic faces came, carrying a large slab, to me, and placed it before the dais of the throne. This slab was of gold, artistically worked in vermiculated beauty; on it were small serpents and worms formed of scintillant jewels. They seemed to be alive, living,—moving fire seemed to quiveringly course through the queerly beautiful slab. On it these boys placed a thick, velvety rug. In my arms I held the diaphanous garment of sweet old time. Two almost nude girls, who on their heads wore garlands of roses, came and assisted me to attire myself in this diaphanous gauze. And after a few moments, a loud burst of music sounded, drowning the preceding euphony. Fifteen sylph-like maidens, also clothed in gauze, at this juncture came gracefully, dreamily in—whence? . . . I dared not think!—*for I knew!* They were clothed in many colored gauzes, elaborately trimmed with gold and gems. They assembled around me, bowed mockingly, and lolled upon

the soft rugs on the floor. They all had flowers, and these they played with, as though they were compelled to do so by a strict, unrelenting power. A violescent light was turned on, as the natural lights were put out,and then, as though I were an implement in a mechanic's hand, I moved. . . .began to dance,fastgracefully, in serpentine twists! Herod, though startled, was absorbingly gazing at me, eagerly drink-all in. I was exceptionally beautiful then, more so than they who, reclining on the floor, served to entrance me. Louder grew the musical extravaganza,—faster flew my visible form,—more absorbed grew the staring King—he madly rushed to me!

“Fairest creature, mysterious goddess, beautiful dancer, fairest that the earth doth hold, be mine! I know not who thou art, thou must be a queen! Prithee, tell me, wilt thou be mine?”

I faintly smiled and continued to dance. No answer did I give him. Oh, how I detested and despised myself!but it was to win—my one Lover, Jardac.

“Thou comest here to dance and arouse me for naught, fair damsel!If thou be a penniless queen come to me, I shall make thee extensively rich. These golden floors and costly rugs thou shalt tread upon; on all my softest satins thou shalt lie; all my choicest wines thou shalt drink; to wit, thou shalt be a rich queen. . . .only be mine?” I ceased dancing. I laughed outright. In spite of my self-reproach, I felt hilarious. It seemed so ludicrous that he was being used for my benefit, while he wished me for his. My silence angered and irritated him.

"Thou demirep! wilt thou me slay thee?" said he angrily.

"No, my King," I answered in mock humility,—
"my life is by the far too precious for thy hand to slay. Now Herod—" And I opened my arms and ceased dancing. He with a bound was by me. I pushed him gently away, simpering:

"My good King, I am not won for naught."

"What willest thou that I do?" cried he, impatiently.

"Prove to me that thou art *King*," I answered in an insinuating tone.

"Prove to thee that I am King?" cried he, laughingly, "—why if *I* be not King, who is?"

"Now thou art coming to it," I said,—
"there is a King born in Bethlehem, who is said to be the real King of the Jews. If I am to be the possessed of a king, I must be positive that he *is* the King. For my aim in life is to live in luxury with the rulers of the earth."

"A king born in Bethlehem?" cried he, in incredulous consternation. My curtness provoked his curiosity and desire.

"Yes; and He *is* a King," I cried, and sorrow and regret began to come upon me, but forcing the voice of conscience into quietude, I went on,—
"a very King of splendor....I have lately seen Him."

"Who art thou?" he suspiciously queried.

"It is not for thee to know,—only have this Child killed——"

"Where is He?" interposed Herod, interrogatively.

"I know not,....I cannot remember...." And

truth to tell, I forgot where I had seen the "King;"—my memory failed me—or was Fate at work in its invincible course?

"What then dost thou will that I do?" he asked, anxiously.

"Find Him," I responded, commandingly.

"If I cannot find this King?" he asked, fearfully.

"I will not be thine," I rejoined.

"Canst thou relent a bit?" he softly said; for he doubted me.

"Either find this new Child-King," I replied laconically and to the point, "or kill all male children under two in Bethlehem if thou canst not find Him, so as to make sure. For knowest thou that I will be but the courtesan of a KING whose rights are beyond all dispute. I am worth it; I am fair. And I tell thee, to thee my origin must remain a mystery; sufficient for thee is the possession of me—and for that—find Him."

"I will find Him!" he confidently cried—"if *He really exist.*"

"Then I will be thine," said I, not having the least intention of fulfilling my promise—"thou great Herod."

"Let me taste the honey from thy lips now?" he asked, as a child asks for candy.

"Not now, Herod," I said; "and let me infer to thee that thou must not even know my name, station, or life."

"No, all I care to know is, and I know, that thou art the most beautiful creature alive!"—he exultantly cried,—“and I shall soon possess thee! I shall be, am,

King,—and thou, who are fairer than dead Mariamne, shall be greater than she.” A shade of bitterness passed over his wrinkled face.

“Be not too sure,” I warningly said.

“Why, woman? Speak!” he cried, his anger and fear of losing me aroused. *He also loved me.* What an admirable creature is man!

“I may die, for I have no home,” I evasively answered.

“Thou shalt stay here, for this palace is thy home. Come. But the maids will also—where are those girls that were at thy feet?....” His eyes blazed for the moment with superstitious fear, for ere he turned his head, these had vanished completely, no trace remaining.

“They left,” I said, and smiled. I loved to see him terrified, for I loathed him.

“They melted! ye gods!....Perchance thou wilt also melt. By the gods, thou shalt not!” and he with a stride was by me, and he clasped me in his arms;—*something* told me to be, made me, docile and yielding. “I’ll carry thee to thy room—a sumptuous place, where we can feast and drink the fruit of the vine.” And so saying, he easily carried me away. I closed my eyes—Jardac rose up before me;—I fondly forced myself to believe that I was in Jardac’s entrancing arms,....my imagination yielded,....and I was aroused by finding that I had clasped my arms convulsively around Herod’s neck and kissed him. A revolent shudder of sickening revulsion caused me to shiver coldly and draw back.

"Thou lovest me!" cried he triumphantly,—“Ah, thou choice maid, thou shalt see Cæsar's Court; thou shalt be honored and loved. And I will find that 'king,' though I doubt whether it can be so,—methinks thou art laboring under a vivid delusion. But I will not seek thee till I have ascertained the truth. Give me twelve sunsets to find out the very true truth, and if I find that thou art in a delusion—”

“I will not be thine; I will go and find another king, though beside Cæsar none is so great as thou, O Herod!” I said in a flattering tone, with a sycophant smile.

After going through several passages, many halls, passing many soldiers, and crossing wide rooms of Roman grandeur and pompous show, we arrived at a room. It was fixed for a lady's use. We entered. And he going to a clepsydrá, which stood on a massive ebony table, said:

“By the great Jove! the clepsydrá tells that the sun will soon set! Set thee down on a divan, some fruits and wine shall be brought thee for refreshment.”

I sat down, as he bade me, on a huge seat hewn out of ebony and upholstered with the softest and finest material. He said:

“This room is fitted for royal lady guests from Rome, beloved; but from henceforth it is thine. Now will I have wine and fruit brought thee. I'll also have my great Dreamer come.”

“Thy Dreamer?” I questioned.

“Yes, he is a wonderful man,” he satirically answered. “He is neither a Jew nor a Roman, but he can

read the past and the future, and his discourse is very amusing and interesting."

He left me, making an exit through a small door near-by. I gazed at this grand, luxurious apartment; it was a gorgeous place of purely Roman style,—over the huge, richly carved door was the Roman eagle and a crown of laurel formed of marvellous gems. I was aroused from my contemplative taking-in of the apartment by the entrance of three persons: Herod came first, followed by a tall, gaunt, unprepossessing man,—he in turn being followed by a boy bearing a tray, upon which were several bottles of the choicest vintage, and a bowl of choice, mellow fruit. The boy-slave placed the tray upon a miniature table of onyx and left. Then said Herod to the man:

"Seat thyself, good Felski, and have some wine; this lady, whose name I know not——"

"Whose name is Nathana, and who is—but let Fate take its predestined course!" said this man wisely and sternly, with a prehensile gesture.

"What art thou ranting about, my good old man?" asked Herod.

"Nothing, no—no—no! nothing, surely naught," he responded, with a leer. Herod smiled an expansive smile, and said:

"This lady is my love, . . . and Felski, I'll tell thee, I love her better than any I have had——"

"Nay! nay thou dost not—'tis the very devil," roared Felski.

Herod smiled and winked at me, and continued:

"She loves me, . . . for she kissed me——"

"She kissed another," interposed Felski, strangely. I stared dazedly at him.

"How the man raves! Ha-ha-ha!" and Herod whimsically roared and growled in convulsive laughter of mirth.

He was more to be laughed at, thought I, for he fondly imagined that I loved him—him, an ugly old voluptuary. I began tremblingly to fear this awesome Felski. I felt that he was not of the ordinary class of dreamers. Herod seated himself beside me, and pouring out three cups of wine, gave us each one. Then said he to Felski:

"Tell me where the girls, who were with this queen, have gone to?"

"Into the fires of remorse!" calmly said this mystic man.

"Well, by all the gods, thou art losing thy head!" said Herod jocosely. "If they went into any fire I didn't see it,—but I suppose I was too much absorbed in gazing at this sweet one to see them depart."

"I have no head to lose, good king. Another possesses it—" said Felski, not heeding his last remark.

"Jupiter and Thunder! what will the man say next?" roared Herod again in mirth and disdain.

"Aye, aye, one possesses it Who is above me,—Whom I am not worthy to touch,—Who lives on earth,—Who was born last night—*Jesus!*"

Had a lightning bolt struck one of us it could not have caused more consternation.

"Who art thou—thou?" I cried in shrinking terror.

"Yes, sinner, tremble," said he sadly and reproachfully,—“I am one who has long believed in Him,—and though I am not worthy to see Him, I would not Him forsake!—Him who is the Child-King of the Jews' of the World!”

“Man, cease thy ranting! What has come over you two?” cried Herod to us, for Felski had risen,—and I had jumped from the couch, and prostrated myself at his feet.

“He caused me to fear!” I cried.

“Sit thyself, thou slippery-mouthed fool. Who told thee of the Child-King?” questioned Herod, tremblingly and anxiously.

“My Father,” answered Felski solemnly, gazing heavenward.

“Thou old fool, thy father cannot be in the world,—he must be dead,” said Herod, nervously.

“Nay, He will never die, because He was never made;” and so saying, the mysterious “Dreamer” seated himself and drank the wine.

Herod not understanding him, thought him a rank fool, and tried to banish the thought of the “Child-King” from his mind, but in spite of his conciliatory conjectures to himself, it would remain, and he was sorely troubled. He tried to appear placid and calm, but the equanimity of his brain had begun seething, and a ferment of thoughts ensued.

“Seat thyself and dream of the past, for instance, prehistoric Egypt,” said Herod, and then he drank seven cups of wine; it having a soporific effect, caused him soon to become drowsy.

"I see the hot sun," began Felski, closing his eyes,—"it beats upon some pyramids. The land about is a forest; a mighty river rushes by. The Sphinx has its impassive, inscrutable face; no secrets does its questioning lips give away. It fronts a lonely fane. A palm tree gently stirs, and music surges in the air....A gorgeously arrayed party approaches, with banners a-flying and horns a-blowing. First, in a palanquin cometh the great King of Egypt, then the priests and seers, then the fair women of the kingdom. The King frowns as they approach this colossal structure, and he mutters, 'When will the god descend from above?' At length they arrive at a pyramid....the mighty king presses an ivory button on the wall....the wall yawns open. He enters, the priests and seers following. The women remain outside. I enter—before me is a golden altar, and upon this altar, engraved on stone, is a semi-human figure—the figure of a man with a fox's head. The music becomes low, and a minor wail is struck.

"'O Anubis! conductor of the spirits of the dead, I beseech thee to hear us,' cries the King, falling upon his knees and offering fragrant incense from a golden censer."—Felski sings the prayers in a sonorous tone.

"'O Anubis,' cry the priests in unison, lighting torches,— 'let the seers prophesy when the god will be real,—when darkness shall be driven away and light appear.'

"Outside, the women sing:

"'O Anubis, hear us, we beseech thee!—thou conductor of spirits, who know many things, let and lead

a spirit to one of our seers, that he may tell when Light will come.'

"Then silence reigns . . . they await the spirit . . . A rushing wind coldly blows through this rich temple, . . . the silken tapestries move restlessly to and fro, . . . the rocks rumble and growl, . . . then a man steps up to the Altar of Anubis, saying:

"Anubis is by me: We are in darkness . . . and the sun will set many a thousand time ere the god will be incarnated. But He will come, . . . He will be born in a stable, born of a Virgin, and shepherds of Judea will worship Him, . . . then also there will come a sin-stained woman. She will worship Him, but will leave—and try to cause the death of this God; but she shall not succeed. We, Egyptians of Egypt, seekers of the Unknown, hunters of the Unseen, shall there be in the place wherein Anubis will place us—the spirit is gone!' He moves slowly back, and a low wail arises. The priests approach the altar, utter some low words, . . . the Altar moves away, and a large gap is seen, leading into a dark, subterranean apartment.

"'Spirits of ye dead,' they sing aloud, 'rest ye in peace! Glory to ye gods.' And then a fiery blaze of electric splendor flashes through the place, that for one ghastly moment I see into the subterranean apartment—it is full of embalmed mummies in gold and jeweled sarcophagi, surrounded by their jewels and emblems. I close mine eyes."

And Felski, with a weird gesture, rose, towered in the air, and cried:

"Ah, ye priests and seers of old Egypt in the Eter-

nal Place, ye were in darkness,—ye worshiped the symbol—eight thousand years ago ye in the beginning of a creed dreamt of the Real, but had only the symbol; ye respected it; yet those who will have the Real will crucify, betray, and outrage Him! And woman, thy lying lips have already tainted the purified air,.... thine evil desires seek His life. O perfidious, base creature! It was thy sex who listened to the snake, and it was to please thee that man sinned!.... Fire, fire!—Yes, hell is full of women!” And with a groaning laugh he rushed away. I was terrified. I knew not what to do.

“He means me!” I cried,—“O how does he know—Jardac.” And this name being my ever-brilliant star of hope, I relented not. And then I fell back on the divan—closed my eyes with pain and fear—and listened to a strain of music which became audible.

I was aroused by the sensation of some one tenderly putting his arms around me. I opened my eyes.... saw Herod bending to kiss me.

“Satan!” I cried, invokingly.

And as though thrown away by a prolific and terrific force, Herod reeled backwards,....and fell.... only for a moment; then he arose, and I, fearing his wrath and anger, was surprised when he knelt down and humbly said:

“Lady, forgive me,....I loved thee so! I could not help but wish to taste those lips—the power of thine eyes made me reel.”

And he, who was to others a cruel, voluptuous mon-

ster, became as a passive, docile lamb ;—and he left me, saying :

“ When I hear news, I will return to thee. If the Child be found, He shall die, for no one is king but me ! I will send a maid-slave to thee. Farewell to thee ; may the gods will that I see thee soon.”

After he had left me, I approached a mirror and gazed at myself. . . . What a change had come over me. I was brilliant and animated ; the glory of my hair was as shimmering sunshine. No wonder, was it, that an old man “ loved ” me to distraction. There was a fire in my eyes ; there was a gesture which I had, which heretofore I had not. I was, all in all, much fairer, fuller and more seducting than when, on that memorable night I had left home for Jardac. As I stood before the mirror, the memory of my mother returned to me. I crushed it away by invoking that one name—Jardac. As it was, I was sustained by a dark power ! . . . After awhile I heard a soft footstep behind me, and turning, beheld a young Jewess.

“ Lady, come and have a bath,” she said, bowing humbly.

“ All very well. What is thy name, prithee,” I said, somewhat condescendingly.

“ Martha, my lady,” she responded.

She led me into a smaller room, where there was a large pool of water in a marble pond. She, with punctual care, removed my filmy garment and bade me jump into the scented water, she, herself, undressing and following. With pleasurable care she sponged and bathed me ; I enjoyed it. Around this artificial

pond were tall palm trees, on which were singing birds; in the center was a fountain of warm scented water. In spite of my loathing for the possessor of all this exorbitant luxury, in spite of all, in the hope of meeting Jardac soon, I endeavored to enjoy myself, and began speaking confidentially to Martha. It seemed that she was a lovable girl, and was not cared for by the retinue of servants in the palace. So, when I spoke kindly to her, she rewarded me by her confidence.

“My mother I remember not, Lady. My father died in prison; he was put there unjustly. And I was brought hither and made a slave,” was her simple, unelaborated tale.

“Poor girl,” I muttered compassionately. “But canst thou tell me who this Felski is?”

A look of awe came over her sweet little face, and she exclaimed:

“Oh, I do not know! He was here when I came. The King thinks him a vapid, fanatical dreamer; he is more! . . . Lady, he is more. For one night—oh! I’ll never forget it—I was in the garden under an olive tree. The moon and the stars were in the heavens, and I sat there praying to the God of our fathers for my father. All of a sudden I heard some one’s voice. Looking I saw Felski. In a passionate tone, he said:

“‘Ye seraphic choir invisible, I hear the music divine! Music—a balm to the tired soul,—a sweet symphony to angels! In all matter there is music:—in the song of the birds, in the wail of the hungry beast, in the rippling, crystalline element called water, in the flowers

—in the earth. And ye stars in yon cerulean void, ye form a song so grand, so incomprehensible, so sublime, that I am loath to enter the adulterer's palace. O ye angels of air, ye angels of space, play your euphonies and sing your songs to my willing ears. Ye are my friends, for mankind is repulsed by me. My body is hideous, my soul is pure. O when will my moment of dissolution come? I hope I shall depart and come to thee, ye spirits of flame and music, after I have seen the coming King.... O Father, let me only see that Son Divine, and I will lay my weary head upon a stone and offer my whole self to Thee;—but as I belong to Thee, I in reality cannot.... Again! ye angels, let me hear the sound of harp-strings!'”—and Lady, cried Martha, excitedly, her voice vibrating with passion, “he stood still, and,....and,....I saw a vari-colored coronal of light encircle his head! O Lady! it blazed....it was grand! And he looked so happy, and then he began to sing! O I shall never forget it—so holy, so awful. This is what he sang:

““O God, the Father, Ruler of Light, God Eternal! Let a worm of defiled smallness offer Thee his thanks for Thy supereminent mercy and exuberant love. From all eternity Thou hast been, and to all time Thou wilt be!’” She repeated this, and in fervor she began to chant Felski's song in her clear soprano.

““Thy Love is impassibly inexhaustible and superabundant. Thy Glory is supernal—supremely supernal, for all supernal glory issueth from Thine ever-radiant Self. Thy vimineous Love brancheth out to every sphere, on which are beings of Thy creative,

fanciful Intelligence. Thou hast by Man been cast aside and blasphemed, yet to him Thou dost extend Thy mercy and Thy Love. In this Divine Concern and Love for Man, Thou dost send Thy Son to earth, to be born most humbly—to be born to cold and snow,—to grief and tears! O God, why art Thou so merciful? . . . Who shall measure the bounds of Thy Love? Who shall tell of the extent of Thy Compassion? This Child of Mercy, of Infant Love, will at His birth shed bitter tears,—will forgive and pardon,—and will be rewarded—rewarded, O Merciful God, by base unthankfulness. He will grow, be buffeted and scorned, as all good in this mundane sphere of hypocrisy and lies is scorned. He will heal and raise the dying,—He will preach Love and Mercy. Yet they who in ages to come will of Him preach, will not preach His Love and Law, but will preach the Law of the Love of Mammon! And woe to these, they are gold without and dross within! Truth will be crushed by them.

“ ‘ O God, I can see the summit of Calvary,—I see the Consummation of Love, of a Law made perfect;—a World is re-born! Lo! Lord, how the thunders will roll,—how the spirits will exult in their redemption from the toils of pain and sin! . . . Thy Son, O Lord, will be nailed to a tree by those whom He loves, . . . the earth it will rock, and the sky it will roar, . . . and the earth will its bowels open, and the graves will bear, all! And dying, He will realize how vain for many His mission will be, and dying in grief He'll commend His Soul to Thee.

“ ‘Glory to Thee, O God! Glory to Thee!’ . . . And, Lady, he fell prostrate on the ground and ate some of the earth . . . I ran away and—and——”

“Thou art somewhat afraid of him, child. Do not be; he will not hurt thee,” I said, comfortingly. And I sighed. My perception seemed blunted.

But this revelation had terrified me, and I resolved that never more should this “Dreamer” see me. At any cost would I win Jardac—aye, even if whole Bethlehem had to die. So is the heart of Woman—when it truly loves. When I thought of him my heart would beat tumultuously, and a terrible sensation would press my temples—as though fiendish hands held me;—and thinking of him, my blood would turn into fire, and a tingling sensation as acute as pain would flow through me,—I would feel as though I were engulfed in lava. And letting myself go on in this stream of lurid imagination, my throat would cease to emit words—and the joy of loving became as keen as pain. And imagining that he was beside me, my breath would come in operose gasps; my lips would hunger for caresses. So did I love him—and this passionate love had started at the “picture” drawn by Satan; for ere that I had been purified, and had been under the influence of my sainted mother;—I had controlled myself. But in spite of all, I was his, and now I gave myself wholly up to my desire.

But Herod should not possess me—that I irrevocably determined. The graceful curves of my form should only he—Jardac—feast upon,—for him only would I live and bloom. Ah, when we should meet

again! How I would caper to his various caprices; how subservient I would be to his desires; how charmingly agreeable I would be! I would captive hold him, for I knew his various and promiscuous vagaries well; and I would humor him. And I became so lost in these entrancing fancies, that I threw my naked arms amorously around the assiduous Martha, and frantically hugged her, muttering:

“Jardac,—at last!Jardac!”

“Lady!” cried the frightened Martha, in constrained terror, and she nearly fell over in the pool in sheer fright. She muttered, “The King will kill me, . . . that story of Felski—did it scare thee?”

“No, pet, no,” I reassuringly asseverated,—“I thought of one whom I loved,—not Felski.” And I kissed her! I kissed her! I, a base, vile creature, dared to kiss unsullied lips! I beat my bosom in painful compunction. I dared not call on God; nay, I sought the death of His Son. I dared not repent.

And now, as I write, I really wonder at that great Love. I sinned most sinfully,—caused my dead mother perhaps woefully to grieve,—was forgiven my sins, and was allowed to see the Christ at birth. I, an evil creature, an impure, defiled, debased thing, was granted pardon, and saw my Lord. Hence let all sinners hope. Seeing His bitter, wistful tears, seeing the little writhing Form on that memorable Christmas night, seeing His grief and His horror of sin, I did not hesitate to seek His death—for the “sake of love”And how many women now do not do the same

thing?—They seek His death by killing Him in other's hearts; and they, who do this, are almost lost.

Let us contemplate Society:—I see now my Vision fulfilled. I see wives holding a husband's love, a husband's honor, and flagrantly flinging them into the dust. In the darkness of night the "true and honorable wife" will leave her husband's side, and sneak stealthily away to her lover. I see the mother giving the children laudanum, so that she will not have the "bother" of tending them. What a deed!—risking the life of the child, while it should be an exceeding pleasure for her to hold those chubby hands in hers; and to have unsullied lips unmarred by lies kiss her; she should love to teach these diminutive angels of God; she should teach them by example, the virtues of Love, Fidelity, and Duty. But does this beautiful creature do it? No. Ah, what an account will these mothers have to give for those neglected duties, those base infidelities, those lost souls! It is the mother who holds the Fate of the child—and what is the fate of the children of To-day? Do they not grow up caring naught for God, their god being Fashion. Their pleasure is Society, where slander breeds and thrives, and where it is sold by the powdered and painted mongers for the price—the Key of Many Hearts—Flattery. Is this the place for children? And when they "tire," for recreation what do they seek,—but "love!" And what is this "love?"—I will not say, for the "pure" lady who reads this narrative, reading the unextenuated truth, might go into a fit of hysterics or convulsions, for her equable temperament and unde-

filed but weak mind could not stand “so shocking a thing!”....Yet she indulges herself and is not “shocked,” you know! Wonderful!

Ah, was it any wonder that Christ in the primeval manger wailed and writhed in acute and unendurable pain?....May my sin be compared with the “Society queen’s!” . . . I sought His death for sin, and sin for love,—but the Lady of To-day does it solely to gratify herself. And to do this, she spares no one; she ruins others by her wiles; she corrupts the young; and she is a queen of Society so long as she is not found out. So long as her subtle poison produces a passing pleasure, so long as her slanderous tongue pleases those who love gossip, so long as she has lovers under a husband’s name, so long she reigns. And it is her supereminent duty to guard herself and to keep up appearances,—so she will not be found out. But the time is at hand when she shall be found out; the time is at hand when those who lost their souls by her will curse her, drag her into her self-made awful Hell;—and then she will wail, but she shall not be spared and given mercy—for she worked for none. And He, who will come in clouds and heavenly glory, will say:

“Where are thy good works?” And she, “wishing that the mountains would fall upon her,” will be compelled to answer:

“There are none; I was a debased but admired wanton; I am a hideous soul now!”

“O Woman!” will He say,—“to thee was given the power to save, but thou didst tempt, and tempting others, fell! With a sweet tongue, thou didst others

sting,—with a seducing face, thou didst others tempt,—with a fine disposition, thou didst enjoy carnal pleasures,—with a husband's name, thou didst seek dishonor to honor,—with children, thou didst kill their souls—what dost thou merit? ”

And what will Woman answer?

Verily true is it that she has the power to save:—let the music of her voice speak of God, and man will soften,—let her soft lips caress, they will soothe,—let her honor be shining bright, and others will imitatingly follow her;—but let her be bad—O Woman, how many souls are not lost by thine accursed wiles?....O Woman, a bright place is for thee in Heaven if thou wish it. Let thy sweet words not tempt, but comfort,—let thy soft hands not seduce, but others help lend,—let thy lips also move in prayer, and let thy life be not for earth's and society's ephemeral glories, but for the place “prepared for thee from the foundation of the world,”—a place which I know is worth working for,—the glories of which are beyond all compare!

“Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth, where the rust and moth consume, and where thieves break through and steal.

“But lay up to yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither the rust nor moth doth consume, and where thieves do not break through and steal.

“For where thy treasure is, there is thy heart also.”
—Matt. vi. 19, 20, 21.

CHAPTER VII.

“THE WAGES OF SIN.”

“MARTHA,” I asked, when she had recovered from her fright,—“is the King a moderately good man?”

“O Lady,” she cried in consternation, “do not ask me! If I say what I believe he would have me——”

“He will never know,” said I assuringly; “he shall not castigate thee or inflict any other punishment on thee.”

“Well,” she slowly replied, “he is not a good man, else he would not keep me in here, for I feel as if I were in a dark, cold prison. He has had many women. . . .” hesitatingly—“as he hath had thee.”

“Girl!” I cried,—“he hath not me;—he may think so, but I’ll never be his.”

“Thank God!” cried Martha, fervently; “Herod is bad; many of us Jews know all,—and it is useless for him to try to ingratiate himself with us.”

After my bath and anointing were over, she brought me a rich jewel-adorned costume, and, after clothing me, led me back to the boudoir. She was a proficient on the harp, and many an hour did she pass pleasantly with me playing. While I sojourned in this palace, I had all the heart would wish; but—Jardac I had not.

True to his word, Herod did not visit me. And from what the astute Martha could learn, he was inquiring diligently about the "Child-King." At first he was inclined to disbelieve me, but murmurs reached him from other sources, and he became worried. Then he consulted the rabbins to find where the Messiah was to be born—at Bethlehem they told him. Hated by the Jewish people, he feared for himself; and his wicked desire of me spurred him on;—for he loved his passions more than his throne. Ah, he was a typical man! But on a certain day a peremptory summons came to me to go to his private room. Martha garmented me in fine, regal clothing, and then escorted me to the door of the room. When I entered, three men bowed and exchanged glances of unconcealed admiration. They were sagacious-looking individuals, and their countenances were of foreign cast. They were finely clothed, and wore gorgeous bazubends.

"This lady," spake Herod, addressing them, "was first to bring me news of the 'King!'"

"Aye, aye," spoke one of them,— "the King. With thy permission, may we address her?"

"No," answered Herod, sternly, stamping his foot, "she is not here to be questioned by you. Nathana—if that be thy name,—wilt thou not tell us where the Child-King is?"

"Who are these men," I inquired, making an obeisance.

"Tell her," said Herod.

"We, Caspar, Melchior and I," answered the dark-skinned speaker, "are astrologers—of our station we

will not boast. We study the heavens, know the tremendous glories of them. Interested in the people, we have sunk into occult knowledge. The world is lost as it were, and a god must save it. We expect this god,—and He is here. From all time the nations have looked for the incarnate God, born of a virgin, incarnated in a new womb of fire. So is Zoroaster a type, said to have been born—Dagno his mother having conceived sinlessly; so have all the Asiatic creeds leaned towards the truth; Japan has their Fio,—China Hoang-Ti, conceived by a flash of lightning,—the Lamas their Budda,—Egypt their Isis—but we and all truth-seekers have the Infant of Love, Christ, born sinlessly of a virgin after the rebuilding of the Temple; so are we told by the Iran—and by light. All religions have the idea of the descent of a God thus,—but we still expect Him. He will save His people from their sins,—and Him we long to see. It is a tradition with us that when He would come a Star would guide us to Him—a Star—the Star of the Hope of the World. The Star for which we longed to see has come! It has led us here to Jerusalem! We cannot see it,—so here the Child must be, the new God, the King of the Jews. We thought his honored highness, Herod, would surely know where the King-God is. 'Tis strange such miracles are unseen! Yet 'tis like men. Herod, great King, on the night we saw the Star, for a transient moment the clinging vines that grew over our habitation burst forth into wondrous bloom and crimson fruit—and wild music surged through the air all the night. 'Twas grand! Our souls did exult and shiver in the

ecstatic strains! Truly He is a God, *the true King of the Jews!* Only a rumor of His birth we hear; surely the whole city ought to celebrate His coming! And thou, Herod, oughtest to have been apprised of His place of birth!"

"Aye, I should have been," growled Herod, angrily, horrid contortions corrugating his visage. "Ye have been in Jerusalem a day; I have tried to find out of Him; but I can hear only rumors, unconnected, wild. The King of the Jews!—Now, mine honored friends, this estimable Lady here first told me of Him. I disbelieved her, thought she was playing me a great joke. Nathana, I beseech thee by thy God, by all Pagan deities, to tell us what thou knowest."

"I can tell you nothing," I mechanically said, with an andamantine firmness.

Herod sighed.

"Well, astrologers, kings," he said, "we must needs find the new God-King; 'tis our duty. Whole Jerusalem must honor Him, give magnificent ovations to His name. If the star led thee here, truly He must be near. Nathana," addressing me—"on thy life tell us what thou knowest."

"Nothing," I bowed, answering, and proceeded to walk to the door of exit, "except that He is born, near here, in Bethlehem."

"'Tis of no use," said Herod, laughing bitterly, "she seems to be blind. But I tell ye, Bethlehem is large, but nevertheless, I ask ye to go there; yes, go on; hunt Him;—and when you have found Him, let

me know—His birth shall Cæsar know and honor; I must honor Him——”

As I was opening the door the men gazed suspiciously at me. Then——

“Never shalt thou honor Him here,” cried a vehement voice. There was a boisterous sound, and suddenly Felski towered above us, the figure of a lithe, gaunt prophet of evil, his eyes flashing, his hands raised. “Not here, but *there*—there where flesh hides no truth, where He is known as King, indeed. I have seen Him, . . . killing joy—my Jesus . . . the . . . holy . . . *Christ*.” And with that sweet name on his lips, he reeled, fell *dead*.

And as he fell, one of the astrologers rushed to him, crying:

“Felski, beloved and unforgotten brother!”

The room was illumined by yellow and purple lights, and the sight of this dead man among the extravagant luxury of the apartment seemed grotesque. And reverently gazing at him, the men muttered some incoherent words. As ugly as he had been in life, so fair and calm was he now in death. A sweet, placid smile was on his still face, it was wholly unruffled and calm. No tell-tale lines of bitterness or evil marred that frank, open countenance; no wonder.

Herod summoned slaves and commanded them to “take the beast away.” He was wrathful and troubled. And I escaped into the hall where Martha awaited me, and we went to my apartment.

After several hours Herod came to me. He was in a fretful mood, and spoke roughly.

"They say what is true," he said, "for on many a life have I heard the words, '*And thou Bethlehem, the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda,—for out of thee shall come the Captain that shall rule My people Israel.*' I told the men to find Him, to do so secretly, so as not to let the people get to know it. If He come forth, the Child-King, insurrection will be inevitable. The people hate me—I want thee to tell me what thou knowest." He arose and drew a sharp sword from its sheath and held it above me. His face was extremely repulsive, and I would have left this repulsive monster—but....*Jardac!*

I was clothed in a gorgeous garment that looked like woven gold; it was thin, clinging, and betrayed the admirable, seducing contour of my form. My hair was tied loosely;—and I was so ravishing as I fell on my knees before him that he relented, bent, and seized me in his arms, casting aside the sword. He hugged me to him, and I thought I should go mad!

"Herod," I murmured, "now thou knowest the veracity of my statements, the truth of my assertion. The King of the Jews is born. His birth is proved by a miraculous star—and other—glories——" I paused, regretful of my loss. "Thou must believe—me—Felski—the men."

"Bah—get on—miracles; that is delusive, but——" he bit his lips ferociously.

"Thou knowest the people are on to it," I continued; "they hate thee—and justly. They would dethrone thee if they could. Now if He live there will be

trouble, thy throne will not be firm. Thou wilt be in danger of losing thy kingdom,—and me.”

“Nay—nay,” he cried, “never shall I lose thee; I shall slay every vile soul of Jerusalem for thee; to keep my kingdom.”

“All that is necessary,” said I, “is that thou dost slay this Child. God though He be, it must be done—Jardac——”

“What!” he said, looking at me, and sitting me on a divan.

“Wilt thou let Him live?” I asked, satirically.

“By Jove,—*no!*” he replied, muttering an oath. “I long ago determined that He should die,—He must die,—for if He live——”

“The populace will have their revenge on thee,” I interposed, my ringing voice making him quail, “they will mete to thee as thou didst mete to them. And being no king, I shall be the mistress of another, perhaps of Cæsar.”

“No,” he said, “for He shall die. Oh, I must not fail——” tears of fear were in his eyes—“I cannot. My friends will do all for me, and to kill Him will be easy. The trouble is—where to find Him. Dost thou not know?”

“The town of Bethlehem,” I replied, and I wanted to remember the place of birth, but I could not,—“where I *cannot* recollect. Oh, search for Him, and if thou canst not find Him, to make sure, have all male children under two killed.”

“But,” said Herod, “where didst thou come to find Him?”

"Herod," I said sternly, decisively, "I cannot tell. I forget where He was, how I found Him; I remember—but I will not tell thee; no, not if thou offer to make me queen; not if thou slay me! Go——" and I jumped up and imprinted a kiss on his lips,—“wilt thou not send forth soldiers to devastate Bethlehem of its male young? For thou wilt surely find Him—do it quickly.”

"Yes, He shall die," he exclaimed, passionately, "but we will wait till the astrologers return. They are strange—they knew Felski. Yes, something has happened, and we shall soon know."

He suddenly arose and left me.

I tried to collect my thoughts, but in spite of my persistence I could not. I was an excellent temptress, a proficient,—yet some one seemed to tell me what to do and say. O I was anxious to have the deed done—I so longed for Jardac. Whenever the thought of the heinous murder of a merciful God's body came to me with terrible thought, I just thought of Jardac—that was an antiseptic for all vehement protestations of conscience. Oh, I was debased, low, a love-lorn woman without self-respect, who hesitated not to try to have an incarnate God killed for personal pleasures.

Many days passed monotonously, and I became nearly crazed. I wandered on the porticoes of the palace, caressed the pigeons—and desired Jardac. I most madly, impatiently, longed for Jardac—to have him pour into my soul the nectarean draught of wicked joy! Oh, oh,—no pain is so frantically maddening as love in abeyance,—it was worse than hell to me.

Herod several times tried to come to me, but I refused him. So knowing that I was determined he remained away and inquired of the King.. But one day, while sitting in the anointing room, absent-mindedly playing in the scented water, a message came to me. It was written in Hebrew characters on vellum, meaning—

"NATHANA:—The wretches have not returned. Into every house of Bethlehem have I sent my men; He cannot be found. The people are more quieted; it will pass over. May I come to thee, who am King, to love thee?

"HEROD."

To this I replied:

"Thou art not King to me if the children be not killed. He liveth among them, I know. If He should appear when He is grown—a King, it will be bad for thee or thine. Yet not alone for thy throne, but mostly for me must the children die so as to surely slay Him—every one; for remember Athalia! The Herodians will aid thee;—it is easy for thee thus to make thy throne substantial. Do it.

"NATHANA."

His answer promptly came:

"NATHANA:—I cannot slay so many. Accursed be the wretches for not returning. Let me come to thee; I am mad;—Jerusalem is mad—mad because the rumor is dying out, because my throne is substan-

tial. Even if He live, I shall be dead when this descendant of David is grown. I want only thee. I am mad. I have loved no maid since I saw thee, thou loveliest thing. Let me come, to stay. All glory shall be thine.

“HEROD.”

An anger possessed me as this I read.

“He will not slay them,” I wailed. “I shall lose—Jardac!”

And in reply, I briefly said:

“Prove thy kingship and thy love! ’Twill make thee safe,—no harm will come of it,—and thou canst have me! If not, then to-morrow morn I leave. Let me see the land of Juda rid of usurpers, and then shall I be the mistress of its honored KING.

“NATHANA.”

I sent this, and then, as I knew the sun was setting, I falteringly went out on the large terrace. The scene was grand! Flaming in a field of red, fiery splendor, the sun was sinking behind the distant hills. The air was fresh and cold, and it refreshed me. I felt stronger and better;—yet there was an awful load upon me. The one thought that occupied and terrified me was, “I shall not get my Jardac.” Gazing at the panorama of fire I trembled, and was seized by a violent, nervous ague. My brain dizzily reeled—and from out those driving clouds of crimson and saffron there peered hideously grinning faces! The sun himself, turning into a ball of coagulated fiery blood, came

whirling to me,—stars flew about and encompassed me,—fire was being ignited within me, and, growing, consumed me,—devils and imps leered and sardonically grinned at me; . . . and above all—I heard a terrible groan—a groan of anguish. And in the distance I perceived an army of soldiers riding fast towards Bethlehem. . . . And presently the sun, covered with hideous, uncanny shapes, came crushingly upon me . . . burning. . . consuming me—red flares and blazes encompassed me, and continually were, in accents sepulchral and brazen, the words repeated, as the sentence of a condemning judge:

“A voice in Rama was heard, lamentation and great mourning,—Rachel bewailing her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not!”

* * * * *

A breeze passed over me; I awoke. The sun was in the east,—it was rising. I had slept on the balcony all night, and now I was numb, senseless, and well-nigh frozen. With tottering steps and an awful fear clutching at my heart, I entered the palace. I summoned Martha and had a warm bath, then ordered and ate some succulent meat. I expected to hear from Herod, and, while cogitating on this, he entered. With a smile of victory on his flushed and brute-like face, he stridently came to me.

“Nathana, thou art mine,” said he, exultingly,—“the deed is done. Well nigh fifteen thousand children have been slain by my emissaries. I am KING! There is none other; I am glad. My rights will never

be disputed." And he came to me, threw his one arm about me—"We will love, and thou shalt go with me to Jericho."

"Satan, God, Demons!" I invoked. And....he victoriously, yearningly bent to kiss me. *Never*—I resolved. I fastened my burning gaze on him, forced my will against him, and....his face was near to mine—flushed—and....a flare as it were of fire blinded him....and with a howling cry he fell writhing in convulsions,—and his elaborate toga was scorched as with fire.

I ran from the room, through corridors, halls, and rooms. A dark, intangible figure beckoned me on!At last!....light!....I was out of the palace... Hope caused me to exult. The deed was done, murder stained the land, essentially caused by my temptings and premonitions to Herod,—and now—now I was going to Jardac. A delicious thought soon to be torn and crushed! Out of the palace I ran, madly, wildly, blindly—following—I was outside of Jerusalem. Suddenly....I grew faint,....weak,....my eyes grew dim,....a dense darkness closed upon me....and—and....I fell—God!!! Livid lines of red fire flew before me in a yellow mist, and I heard laughing—wild, vengeful laughter. I felt as if I were being tied, laid on some beast—and carried on....Wild shrieks of pain were howled in my ears,....and I heard a sad, stentorian voice cry as from a tomb—"Azazel, Ariel, Thundrel—*on . . . on . . .* to show the mortal the wages worked, the vengeance of devils, the power of unseen hands, the truth of God, the evil of Lie, the

power of Sin!—*on!*" And a terrific crash of thunder answered him. "*Aye—Aye, Sancte Lucifer, aye—amen . . . aye!*" and a growing cry echoing around me, stifling with terror and pain....I opened....my eyes—free.

Some distance off was Bethlehem,....before me stood a princely Personage, smiling, around whom played lambent blue flame. I would be given Jardac—O joy! O wondrous power, unseen glory of devils—sweet reward of sin! . . . My mind grew clear, my love more impatient. I feared not the devils in the joy of anticipation; I was half insane with wild desire.

"Jardac—Jardac," I called. And impatience was causing me expectantly to tremble.

"Call, fool," cried Satan, and sardonically laughed. "I tempted him to return to thee; he will not;—but to other temptations of mine he does listen. He wants thee no more—I want thee no more."

I had thought with joy that soon we would be in the orange grove, Jardac whispering soft, gentle words to me——

"What? God! He won't return!" I cried in angry grief and apprehensive pain.

"No," he replied, laughing in vengeful exultation and triumphant joy; "and I cannot make an insect of the forest do what it does not wish! I cannot cause him to come to thee;—he is lost to thee—on this terrestrial globe!"

"Thou didst promise," I moaned madly, and tears of entreaty fell from my burning eyes.

"Never...." said he. "Remember I neither com-

manded nor promised. I simply tempted. Thou in thy blind folly didst eagerly do what I bade thee. Worldly passion being evoked in thee, thou didst lust for that sinful blot on manhood, thy old lover, thy soul's affinity, who did thee abase. Thou didst work evil,—but He did not die,—but other evil was caused. Oh, I suffered! Oh, I was glad thou didst sin,—thou wilt soon see what thou hast worked upon thyself. Neither God nor Devil inflicts pain on Man; he does it himself. I suffered,—I hate thee. Thou canst never have the fulfillment of thy desires. Begone, thou accursêd carrion, *begone*....and get thy reward." And he gloated at me with malicious hate and gratified envy. And propelled onwards by a Force prolific, onward—on I sped.

What an agony consumed my heart!....what an awful despair! I had totally given up God and Hope of Heaven,—I had caused my mother's heart painfully to throb and break,—I had deeply sinned and caused the blood of children to flow:—this was my reward, worked upon me by myself. Oh, I was in dreadful misery! in fearful anguish! My heart ached with an excruciating vacuum.—O bitterness bitterer than gall! —I could not have him, and he was all I wanted....

Had he never met me on earth, this might not have happened. Had he met me and taught me pure love, not sin, it would not have happened. O what happiness could have then been ours! But vain—in vain! Oh, God. And I hated him not; I loved him devoutly—my longing for him made me mad. Oh, this is a proof of man's evil ways, the proof that Man leads

Woman astray, that Love avenges itself. Yet Woman suffers more than Man,—yet it is she who saves man, who helps him to atone! The legend of Psyche and Eros should be changed; it should be Eros who burns Psyche with the oil—the burning oil, Sin!

"Jardac!" I wailed—"O Love....in spite of Hell I will have thee, Jardac!....O my one god!....Jardac! Oh—oh—oh—oh—God . . . Jardac! Love,—Love! I have so surely expected thee, that—that—I cannot bear to—to lose thee—Jar——" I broke off in an inarticulate sound. My throat became swollen,—I clenched my hands, the nails pierced my palms and the blood flowed,—my lips became blue, and my eyes protruded like glassy balls from their sockets. Death was preferable, a thousand times, than this heart-eating torture. Foiled!....Baffled!....I had darkly and hideously sinned;—now what was given me? A blacker soul,—a hotter Hell,—an unendurable agony,—and an unquenchable fire. A gala crimson garment was upon me,—it looked as though it were stained in blood!

A house appeared before me—the house where I had left my baby....A sweet memory struck a tender chord in my heart....one ray of Hope!....the mother love was stirring. My agony softened,—a sweet pang shot through my heaving bosom. Like a hungry, ravenous animal I rushed into the house. It was empty. Signs of conflict were plainly visible; the household utensils were scattered in confusion upon the floor. Another door was before me. With hesitation I opened it. A sense of terrified suffocation came over me....I trembled. With deliberation, beating heart,

shaking limbs—I stepped inside! A flickering flare of red light suddenly illumined the dismal, grewsome place . . . and I saw—O God of Love! . . . I saw my last Hope—my Child! ! !

“O ye devils and fiends incarnate,” I cried, and the agonized anger that possessed me caused me to rave and tear my hair in frenzied fury. “God damn ye all to eternity! . . . My child! . . . Jardac’s—oh!—Jardac’s child!” And I stood still, the infernal light weirdly illumining the place, causing me to see—a *dead child*. Lying upon the bare and bloody floor, white, naked, and cold in death lay a small child cut in twain! . . . The clotted blood was there in a thick pool. With a crazed resolve I jumped to the spot, and in a crazed, stupefied manner cast myself upon the floor . . . and drank some of the clotted blood!

“Ha-ha-ha!” I heard a voice; and that “Ha-ha-ha!” was echoed as from a million mouths. I looked up,—before me towered—the once bright Star-of-the-Morning, Lucifer.

“God curse thee to Hell forever!” I cried. And rising, I held in each hand a part of the body of my child. The red flare grew denser; dark forms I perceived moving around the room in fantastic ghastliness; and that continual “Ha-ha-ha!” of sibilant derision nearly crazed me.

“The blood has been poisoned by the poisoned sword of the soldiers,” this Spirit of Evil leeringly cried,—“soon thou wilt be in Hell, justly suffering. My ultion is grand—grand, ye devils! . . . What a sweet amenity to my soul thou art!” And with a malignant,

sneering, sardonic laugh—he disappeared, a roar of crashing thunder ensuing. I bent my head. I was smothering! I ran, tottering, ready to fall, from the room out into the open air.

The sun was rising high; the air was refreshingly cool. Afar, far off in the distance rose some snow-covered hills prominently to view. Above all others, one towered high....the brilliant sun shone upon it, causing the snow to sparkle. A mad and goading thought entered my head. There—there in cold solitude would I go!....There, where the mountain towered above the earth, I could die!....Heaven, hell, and devils should neither bar nor deter me!....On, faltering legs! carry the impure carrion to death! You will not refuse this last wish when you have so often walked the earth in the illicit pursuit of sin. Surely, ye limbs of a body in which slept a damned and black soul, will not refuse to carry your contortioned carcass to the gateway of hell!....And onward I sped—held up by demons, pitied by angels—on over land and snow! Never perhaps before did any being corporal perambulate the earth so swiftly. On, on, ye tiring limbs!....On! The sun rose higher, the ground was cold, and my feet left prints of blood behind. Yet on,—onward....to Death and to Hell! I cared not whither my soul would go—only oblivion!....On—on—for hours,—seldom resting,—in a distraught state—on!

“Jardac—lost!....Baby—dead!” was my inward wail of stifled torture—and on.

Ever and anon I would fall from sheer exhaustion,

and after lying awhile, I would coax my limbs, exorcise them, . . . and onward I sped, . . . on, on, over land, hills, grass, and water. My very dirt-incrusted soul rebelled against its almost extreme grief! My breath became difficult and labored. I was in crucial misery. O God! let me only arrive at the pre-eminent Point! . . . The air grew cold . . . The day was beginning to wane . . . The blood painfully oozed from my pores. . . . I began to tremble . . . and those "Ha-ha-ha's" again derisively echoed in my dimly growing ears. My eyes were dim, and as through in a rush of flame, I saw sad spectral faces, praying, weeping, yet beckoning me on! . . .

Let the snow-capped mountain be my bier, let the winds sing my requiem,—let the vulturous birds of prey eat my flesh—and it would burn them. . . . *and they would die!* O ye legs, ye will not fail me in this last exigency! On! . . . on! . . . at last—O trenchant joy! . . . after terrible grief, incoherent clamoring and awful pain, I really at last arrived at the summit. I gazed down into the valley. The scene was extremely tragical and horribly grand! Upon this white mountain, I in horror and pain and trembling stood, the crimson flower-embroidered cloak flowing to the winds, in each hand a part of the bloody body of the child. With ease I raised them aloof, and an immortal anger possessed me. I swayed to and fro!

"O ye devils! I hate you! You have caused this! Heaven curse you!" I cried, and anger and immortal agony invincible were upon me. I cast myself prostrate upon the snow-covered ground. Strange as it

was, I blamed not God but Satan! . . . Nowadays God is given credit for being one's persecutor, but in reality Ego alone is culpable for his tribulations and sorrows; for deeds make Fate. From the awful ascent of the hill, I began to feel really tired, and a sort of deeper lethargy fell upon me.

"Love, accept this immolation! and let my putrid body be the food of predaceous birds! No one but thee—Jardac—can mitigate my grief—" I dazedly cried—stopping suddenly, . . . for in the distance, high up in the heavens, I saw that regenerating Sign of Love—the Cross; of golden, fiery flame, towering and glowing, it shone,—and the warm transforating beams pierced my heart—and it melted. Something dark passed from me,—some evil spell seemed waning. I felt acutely relieved; and I became imbued with a sweet, regenerating Love. As icicles melt while the sun on a Winter's morn rises over distant hills, so did my heretofore hard heart melt and my soul awaken in the Memory of Love—this Sign of Salvation. Blazing in its supernal, golden glory, surrounded by billows of clouds of amethystine silver, and sapphire flame, it caused potent memories sweet to surge through me. Strange though it is to tell, my bitterness passed away—and once more I remembered the Infant of Love! . . . A burning sword of blasting remorse pierced my soul! . . . I remembered how in His manger after birth He had wailed woefully and had shed bitter tears for sinners;—surely His infinite grief was bitterer than mine! . . . He loved me,—He had forgiven me—and how had I returned His Love?—In pursuit of

concupiscent love I had sought His death,—and thousands of children had been mercilessly slain, hundreds of homes made desolate. Then passionate, repentant agony caused me to whine. My soul awoke as it were,—saw—loved,—repented—suffered.

“O God, O Father,” I cried, “I am . . . sorry . . . I am worthy of my grief. My sins merit it. O God, if thou canst have pity and mercy upon me, accept my grief. O God, I am sorry . . . *forgive!*” And I fell face forward into the snow, a pool of blood issuing from my mouth, staining the white snow crimson. O exquisite Repentance, O ineffable Love! Oh, how the Cross scintillated and sparkled! I heard sweet, seraphic singing! . . . All the faculties of my soul were keenly on the alert! . . . *something* would happen! Before me in the air there shot jets of vari-colored glory like unto sunbeams dancing on the araneous web of a spider. Something indefinably sweet came over me. A mighty love, a terrible sorrow caused me to spring up, . . . and, standing with eyes of glazed grief and pain bulging from their sockets, the sound of music—a threnode unlike any I had ever heard—echoed in the air! It was like the deep, dolorous, mystic music of the 'cello—yet it was so uncanny and unreal. Presently a sensation as of wine running through me caused me to burn with inward fires; something burning scorched me; I felt as though I were engulfed in a fluvial flow of consuming lava. A struggle—a panting for breath; there came a roaring sound—as of a falling cascade—to my noisome ears; crimson and blue wings of fire flaringly encompassed

me,—and then . . . one more convulsed struggle,—a "Christ forgive!" issuing from my parched and pinched lips, . . . a blinding flare—a sickening giddiness—and . . . I felt as though I were making a painful egress from a close, crowded, stifling room, and *I was free!*—free from the bondage of mortality.

On pinions pre-natural I was sailing upwards with lightning rapidity,—I was dead—aye, *living!* . . .
"Glory to God of supernal glory.

"Amen."

CHAPTER VIII.

A SOUL OF UNREST.

Ан, to the anguished soul the moment of dissolution is sweet! . . . On, up,—on aerial pinions of flame. Through air, clouds, and space! The vanishing earth, which was quickly receding, became as a dim speck in the distance. On, up! past populated systems of worlds—up! An innate instinct drew us upwards—a feeling awful was upon me. *I knew*: I saw my life; I knew how unfit I was to enter Heaven, how much work would be necessary for me. I longed to help others, I loved the work which I knew I must do;—*but I suffered*. My conscience judged me, sentenced me:—God—the Spirit of Light—saw me; for me He had naught but love. For the devils in hell He has naught but love:—Love is His Being.

I had lately repented: I persisted not in sin; I would do good work; I would do no harm. Hence Heaven was to be sometime mine.

“And My people, upon whom My Name is called, being converted, shall make supplication to Me, and seek out My face, and do penance for their most wicked ways,—then will I hear from Heaven, and will forgive their sins, and will heal their land.” *

* II. Par. VI., v. 14.

“Let the wicked forsake his way and the unjust man his thoughts, and let him return to the Lord, and He will have mercy on him, and to our God,—for He is bountiful to forgive.” *

These words were spoken to the prophets of old, and verily true are they.

I could not yet pass the flaming “gate;” for my “wages” were not sufficiently paid. By the word “wages,” I mean the work sequent upon sin. Not that God needs satisfaction—*i. e.*, suffering and pain offered to Him as penance, to “appease His anger and displeasure;” but the dim soul—*i. e.*, the soul not bright and whole with good works—must pray and work, so that it may grow, acquire a heavenly beauty, and ultimately work itself into so pure and exalted a state that it can enter God’s world. Every sin decreases the heavenly Life, and hence, to regain it, a meritorious work for every sin must be rendered. Sin engenders its own punishment—Remorse and Remembrance; Goodness engenders its own reward—Beauty, Holiness and Joy. God curses no one into Hell—sin does; God does not want the grief of a soul “to appease His anger!” Blasphemous and sacrilegious is the idea that the God of Love needs—or could even wish—the sacrifice of suffering beasts, much less that of the soul of a man, to “appease” Him! As though He were a sanguine murderer or a despotic ruler! God is pure Love; hence He loves the soul and wishes it joy;—and in this Love, He sent to earth a part of Himself as an Example to men, and this sublime Ex-

* Isaiah LV., v. 7.

ample lived and died—all to give men the Lessons of Love.

Sin itself makes its own punishment; for, realizing what Love is God's, what it might have been, the Soul suffers. And working its way to Heaven, Memory oft-times stings, Remorse oft-times gnaws,—for only in Heaven is found perfection and immunity from pain. And out of Heaven the Soul is vulnerable—I was out of Heaven; I had “wages” to pay. To pay the “wages” I was in the prison—the Purgatory of Air and Space—of which it might be said: “*Thou shalt not go from thence till thou pay the last farthing.*” And verily true and entreating are the words of the author of the “Second Book of Machabees,” saying: “*It is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that may be relieved from the memory of sin.*” For they need prayers. And could mortals know the awful grief of some of those souls in that “prison,” they would be moved to heart-whole pity. Before I shall give a poorly detailed narrative of that “prison,” I wish to say to those who deny the existence of this place, vaguely called by some, “Purgatory,” by others, “Limbo,” and by others, “A place of waiting.” This place is not for all a place of peaceful waiting, but a place of dreadful woe, of holy sorrow,—and the impatience of waiting is a heart-rending and racking pain. And it is not a prison, except that the soul is the prisoner of its memory.

Some mortals say that after decease a soul goes to either Hell or Heaven. There is no Hell for a pure soul; the soul creates its own Hell; there is always a

Heaven, and it is the soul that shuts Heaven on itself. If a Soul works well on earth, it will go straightway to God's World; if a repentant Soul is retrograded by Sin it must redeem itself. Hence in the air around the earth the spirit works, and helping and comforting other souls, suggesting good thoughts to and warning mortals. Thus it raises itself upward, attaining its fated glorious End. In this "prison" in which the soul is free, the Soul, oh, so ardently longs, craves for Heaven! It remembers its sins, and it awfully suffers! It feels blasting remorse, and it writhes in anguish! This pain is purging, makes it realize, and it zealously strives to get Heaven. The soul makes itself as it were! O the marvellous precisions of the scientific Self-Work of the Soul! Everything counts, nothing is lost to it. It is a proof that God is good.

What grief was upon me—an awful sensation of burning torture and awful grief. O God! could I stand it? Oh, terrible torture of Memory! of Remorse! It was bitterer than all earthly pain:—I was separated from Him for whom my soul most fiercely hungered. The scroll of my life was clearly unfurled and I truly saw myself and my baseness. An acute, racking Remorse caused me to writhe; an awful, vivid Remembrance caused me to shrink in shame. Down! down to earth again—sailing in the air—to be seen and helped in my misery by others—to be pitied and helped along! On this sphere I saw where I had sinned—and *I suffered*. And the remembrance—the remembrance of the night in which Jardac had led me

from home, caused my weak Being almost to hate him. "Had he never seen me I might be in glory," thought I; and I almost hated—and *fervently loved him*. Oh! my Being trembled when I thought of him. Every gesture of our unlawful *liaison* irrepressibly repeated itself before me. The God I now loved—aye, wholly adored and loved—I knew I had then grievously wronged; and the sense of gnawing Remorse and stinging Shame, evoked from the thought that He was so merciful and good and that He had been rewarded by the basest ingratitude by me made me quail and well-nigh loath MYSELF. Down, down to puny earth again—to suffer,—to see! . . . Down! A Spirit of Sorrow was I. I was among others . . . and seeing, I sorely grieved. Down to earth—in darkness. I was in darkness, though I could plainly see this puny sphere. I was out of the Light of Celestial Glory, in the Darkness of Remorse and Shame. In company with others, I sailed over the earth, . . . saw the places of awful memory, . . . lived again. I saw awful scenes enacted about me—I suffered more acutely than ever I had in the flesh. And yet Love was mine—LOVE! And yet I shrank in tearful misery and shame.

I was at my old home, . . . at the spot where Jardac had declared his love, . . . went over the ground along the path where we had trod on that memorable, accurséd night. Stabs of acute pain, of twitching agony caused me to suffer keenly! These scenes caused the old memories to be so vivid! Oh, that I could escape from those pangs of torture! . . . I arrived at Jardac's mansion—O Memory take away thy

sting! . . . The place was deserted. Over the earth and away . . . to the Stable of Bethlehem. . . .

Once more there, there was the crib, the straw, and the hay. No more. Again that night appeared before me,—again I knew that those graces had been misspent, that I had most hideously and heinously sinned—and I paid pangs of torture and fervently prayed. Vividly there appeared to me the smile of recognition between Christ and the Baby. Jardac's child was this that had been recognized by the Child of Love?—No; it was the Father's child—the Soul. I had seen the glory of the Celestial Reality; and, oh, my Self hungered and longed for such a home—yet I was in darkness; I was a Soul of Unrest. I had seen the agonized tears of the Child—oh, oh God!—spare me the pang! what an ungrateful, unworthy wretch I had been! *O perturbed Soul, no torture was unworthy of thee.* How that dear Child had cried—shedding tears for sinners! How he had suffered in the manger when He knew what I would do, what ungratefulness I would exhibit, what sensuality I would with alacrity jump into, what evils I would cause—and good! Ah, the Soul doth truly suffer in the Realization of Sin.

I loved God—loved Him wholly, *with my whole soul.* No other being existed for me in comparison with Him—yet I was separated from Him—*O horrible torture none is so great as thine!* I was separated from God, knowing the hideous horror of my past sins, realizing my unworthiness—Yea, I was unworthy:—In the hour after seeing the Child of Children, I let

goodness wane and sensuality grow—of my own free will, at the temptation of a vision. Within an hour after seeing the God-Child of Mercy, I, in spite of warnings, threats, and entreaties—from even Satan himself,—willingly grasped at the opportunities by which I expected to reap the reward—sinful love. And did I get it? No. And now I thank God that I did not; for had I, in the abysmal depths of the unguessed tortures of a hell would I and he—Jardac—most probably now in torture indescribable, unnamable, be! I exulted in thanksgiving that I had escaped that—for there was yet hope for me. *And I prayed.*

Down, down to mundane earth again, unseen by mortal eyes, with woes unknown to mortal senses. I *knew*, I *felt*—moreover, I suffered keenly. Aye, there is no pain, no matter how terrible,—no grief, no matter how hard it be to bear, that is—barring the torment of the damned souls in Hell—so keen, so soul-gnawing as the torture of the Soul, who knowing God, His Love and Mercy, and realizing its sinfulness in shame, is doomed to pay, in the world beyond the grave, the wages unpaid while in the flesh, for the sins done in the flesh. As I fell, every connecting link and circumstance of my mortal life was consecutively visible before me.

As I fell, I saw the fruit of my deeds. Wandering around in air, there being many others near, I suffering my agony alone, I saw sad scenes: Pausing in my spirit's flight at a hut, I saw a mother holding the twain parts of a sweet, young child in her arms; she hugged it, frantically kissed it, and in despair caught

up a knife and drove it into her own heart, muttering:

“The God of our Fathers and Abraham and of Moses . . . has . . . deserted — us —” in choking gasps—“Herod! a million curses—of a dying heart be—upon thy head;” and so saying, she fell back—dead. Dead to live again—in grief. And as that soul went into Grief, my suffering became more unendurable and intense, for with sisterly love I sincerely pitied her, and I prayed for her. Onward, doomed spirit! suffer the fruits of thy will! . . . I saw a father holding a wee mite in his hand aloft, crying:

“Yea! yea! cursed be Thou, O God, who hast let Thy wrath descend upon us. Take Thy fill of damned bloody mirth! Take—take—take me and enjoy to Thy heart’s extent the sight of my going into hell!” And then, with a demoniacal cry of half-rage, half-pain, he drank a cup of pale green poison, and in a few moments—fell dead . . . to live again. Another soul in Grief! Nathana, thy burdens are becoming justly heavy . . . Two girls of tender age were kneeling by a dead child. There was a glassy glare in the one’s eyes.

“Bruver—dear!” she cried in broken Hebrew, “Bruver, mother’s dead—gone to Moses—I’ll go to!” And rising up, she ran into a house, seized a sharp poniard, and without any hesitancy, with childish temerity, raised it aloof . . . and drove it into her tender, sinless heart; and closing those doleful eyes of glazed agony, she fell, speeding with spirit flight into ultra-mundane spheres,—perhaps, but not directly, to Heaven. As

this deed was done some burden seemed lifted off me; I felt a thrill of joy. Was this soul, by an undesigned deed, saved from a fate worse than death? Perhaps, for many were. The other child fell procumbent to the cold earth weeping . . . A woman was before me, in a loud voice crying:

“Cursed be Thou—Thou merciless Dispenser of all evil! Thou hast let that accursed Roman, under whose silken sandal we writhe, kill the children of Bethlehem of Judea—our own children! We know Thou art unmerciful,—now—we know!” Others joined her, and murmured assent and approval. Cursings and revilings terribly echoed about me. Clothing was cast off, and women scratched their flesh in insane frenzy, and then, when the flesh was lacerated horribly, clasping their dead babies, they raised their heads to the One above, and cried:

“See us! See Thy chosen people! See how we are rewarded! O most holy, plenteous Giver of Love, behold Thy victims!” And laughing convulsively in mockery and insanity, they damned their souls, causing Christ to wail in infinite, preternatural agony. Oh, oh, I suffered: Every curse heaped a greater load on me, for their curses harmed themselves; and I pitied, and prayed for them. Every death caused the fire in me to burn more fiercely,—every torture of those stricken ones caused the painful compassion to become greater—And the knowledge that this was my work, that I—shown mercy by the One whom I sinned against, from whom my cursed deed kept souls,

was by this One forgiven—forgiven at the last, caused me to writhe in merited shame. I fervently prayed; and I prayed for others. That day seemed an endless cycle of time to me,—and that day I suffered, reeled in misery, writhed in anguish, for I saw so many sad scenes—scenes of sorrow that I was the cause of.

“O Holy One, alleviate her tortures, . . . soothe her suffering spirit. Let my supplication reach Thee,” said a sweet, doleful voice by me. It came from a spirit such as I. An impulse—a tender love of sisterhood, caused me to cry:

“O lovely God of exquisite mercy, in Thy sweet compassion, in the name of the Child, take off this sister soul as much, and more grief as has, by her prayer, been taken off me.” And a smile of joy for an instant irradiated that wan, fire-consumed face. She then flitted away in her path of sorrow, paying the just, inexorable, yet withal sweet “wages of sin.” Albeit, I knew that God was most kindly good.

Days passed to the earth’s measure of time—centuries to the soul’s measure of time—which is SUM.

Well-nigh a “year” passed—a year of work and torture, love and help, repentance and remorse. Thousands of souls were in this purgatory—thousands of souls who in life had let their lamps burn dim, who, repenting at the last, had here to pay the penalty of sin and work, so as to become as they once were—pure and angelic. For, know you all, sin diminishes the beauty of the soul—every sin, mark you. And to become bright, pure, and powerful—fit to enter the

Sphere of empyreal grandeur—the soul must pay every farthing and work—meritorious work—so as to reform itself into its intended natural grace and luster. If this is not done in life, then truly it must be executed in the next, ere it can enter Heaven. In this place between many souls suffer as it were in darkness; and here the soul distinctly remembers and painfully feels every pang accruing from sin in twitching pain—not pain as pains the material body, but the pain of remorse,—the dolorous pangs of remembrance. In this place—in the air around the earth and in the spaces between—the dim soul has little perfect joy: it instinctively knows what the supreme glories of Heaven are, but the blissful realization is not realized—but, oh! the longing is intense!

In the interim of that year I suffered indefinable, horrible dolours. Other souls were with me, praying for me, comforting me, thus lightening my burden, alleviating my torture, helping me to Heaven,—I praying for them,—we fulfilling the exhortation, “Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.”

As chronicled previously, for every soul lost at the slaughter of the innocents, I grieved sincerely, and for every innocent soul saved, I felt a tinge of grand joy. And visiting the places of sad, sinful memory, I grew heartfully sad,—visiting the places of memories sweet and pure, I grew impatiently and fretfully reckless. for I longed, with a soul’s desolate longing, for the transcendent joy of Heaven. And with this longing, there was another longing—strange though it be, unreal as it may seem, *I LOVED Jardac still*. I ardently

loved Jardac with a heartrending love—a Love holy and pure. Oh, the awful, vacuous sense of incompleteness! Oh, I nearly as it were went wild with longing. I prayed for him, hoped to find him soon. I did not hate him, no, no, I loved, forgave him. Yet he was essentially the cause of my plight,—he, a strong man.

And I caution all you men possessing a maiden's heart, not to ask the pure maid, whose love and trust are placed in you, to fall into the mire of sin. Woman's nature, being finely strung, is easily led—led upward or downward. If her love and trust are placed in you, teach her of Heaven, of the goodness of God, and your reward shall superbundantly be rich; you shall be with her in Heaven's greatest joys forever. If her love and trust are placed in you, and you lead her astray, beguiling her into sin, causing her by your blasphemous tongue, to give up Religion, Virtue and Prayer—finally to become evil, you shall, unless you truly repent and offer acceptable reparation, be cursed into the things of darkness unfathomable. If she ask you first to sin, consent not, but reproach her and convert her. And know you, men of the world, when a soul is once stained it is “a reed bent by the wind;” and it is subjected to an awful fate!

All who repent are forgiven. But how few sinners ere Death return to the Way, the Light, and the Truth, after they have once left the Path of Righteousness, from which they have wandered in the pursuit of sin, choosing the Path of Retrogression! Going into sin, saying, “When it is over, I'll repent,” the sinner usually meets with the just reward of presumption.

But the sinner who in darkness has wandered away, let him return, repenting and praising God, and let him not doubt—and doubting ask for a sign, for of the doubting evildoers may the phrase be applied: “An evil and adulterous nation seeketh a sign; and a sign shall not be given it.”* And let the “lost sheep” return and believe; and believing, repenting; and repenting, they shall be forgiven.

O ye sinful souls, hearken to my voice: Extiolate yourselves by willingly placing yourselves, with hearts full of repentance and good work, into the beams of the blanching light permeating from God, called Mercy. And doing this, O sinner, no matter what clouds may benight thy horizon, thou shalt be in light—for the Light is within thee; and to angels it—even in the darkness surrounding thee—shall shine as the phosphorous luminance shines from the unostentatious glow-worm or the unpretentious fire-fly in a cloudy night. And be not influenced by the untrue talk of selfish preachers, political demagogues, and evil people; but live in the love of God, committing no sin, and hardly endeavoring with all thy power to pay the price of past sins, thus regenerating thy soul, causing it to be a tree of vimineous goodness, love, grace, and beauty to the All-Seeing Eye. Pay the “wages” of thy sins by humiliation, piety, and brotherly love on earth, so that it will not be necessary for thee to do so in the Life after death;—for the soul after its release is acute, and suffers a million times more keenly than it does on earth. I know—I terribly experienced.

* St. Matthew, chapter xii. 39.

I tell the truth. Oh, awful, terrific, sad is the torture of Memory, the grief of Remorse. After "death" realization is acute, keen,—the soul loves God as the flower loves the sun,—the soul suffers in knowing, and working, it suffers,—and longing for that Great Love, it nearly goes wild in grief, expectation, and joy. Let all sinners repent and leave off their evil ways,—do not wait till death. It will be too late. Work must be done to get to Heaven. Do it. Do not spend all time in sin,—for the punishment sin wreaks on itself is horrific, terrific, horrible, beyond the telling in words. I know. Although I suffered not as unrepentant souls do, as souls in Hell do, I know what spiritual pain is. It is scientifically just, exact;—every touch of a mortal body that had in it a thought of evil is a dolorific pang to the soul in pain, and Remorse is maddening. Hence I warn all, I come to earth to tell the truth, I, a spirit that suffered. And of all the sins that bring blighting pain and wild agony, it is the sin of Love led astray—the Sacrilege of Love on the altars of the god—Lust.

Hence I warn all who have sacrileged this sacred Grace! Repent, atone,—for if any one dies with wrongs unatoned or unavenged—beware! Every touch, kiss, word that was sinful, I paid for in memory; the love of Jardac and me was sacrileged,—and, oh, every thought of evil that had been mine repeated itself before me in the excruciating anguish of remorse. All the graces that had been given me in life and which had been misspent, I paid for by regret,—I knew that

if I had been good I would have been with God,—and I grew frantic in sorrow. The sinner may avert the penalty of sin by following the forgiving Christ and atoning. How good this is! Let all sinners wash themselves in His grace. Let the man who has led a poor, weak woman astray, offer her reparation, lead her as near to Heaven as he took her from it, help her to atone, love her purely—and thus retrieve the fault—and if he does it not, let him beware! As he sinned, so shall he suffer. And satisfaction is due the Wronged. And if he does not repent and atone, he himself is to blame if the wronged soul avenges itself—and fearful and baleful is this Vengeance!—Jardac had to have my pardon; I gave it, he atoned on earth, prayed for me, followed Christ, and was sorry for his sins,—I in turn prayed for him,—and Justice was satisfied.

Hence I do beseech all to follow Christ, and to “go and make peace with thy brother,” and to love and obey. And the only sure guide to Heaven is Christ—Christ taken as He is. He is not taken thus To-day,—hence I warn the world, speak to the world, telling the truth to the world.

And O mortal soul, I ask thee not to follow me, but follow Him who saved me. Repent, atone on earth,—and help all mortals to heaven, using thy faculties not for thyself, but for others. And doing as I advise, subsequently Heaven with its supernal joys and vari-colored radiance—and GOD-LOVE, will be thine inexpressible reward. Then shall darkness be dispelled for-

ever, and thou shalt see. And thou shalt be impervious and invulnerable to sorrow, grief, and pain.

According to the earth's standard of time, I was in this purgatory for about a year, when one night I descended into the room of Herod the King. He was lying upon a sumptuous couch; by his side were two slaves fanning him with brilliantly-colored ivory and feathered fans; before him, on a low stand, was a rich epicurean repast, enough to cause any one's mouth to water, to express it in common parlance; but he gave not the least attention to it,—*he gazed at me*. Once since my demise had human eyes been able to see me; and it was no wonder that when he saw me his eyes bulged, glared, and protruded from their sockets, as though his terrified soul were making a labored exit through them; that his face became convulsed and pinched; that he trembled and shook with fear and pain; that his tongue burned, and an acrid taste flavored his sparse saliva; that his breath came in jerky, convulsive gasps;—for *I* was a horrible remembrance,—I was a “ghost in a bad dream.” For I appeared with a look of terrified, agonized sorrow in my eyes,—I was a picture of a terrible, desolate woe—and *I was desolate*. For God, whom I longed for more than anything living, was not with me,—Jardac was not with me . . . He might be in sin;—and as I thought of that, as that fearful conjecture painted itself before me, I prayed fervidly—prayed that he might be saved.—I prayed for mortals . . . and no mortals prayed for me!

As Herod gazed at my delicate, fiery form, he cowered back under his covering, trying to hide me from his vision—but he failed. A spasm came upon him. The slaves yelled vociferously, running hither and thither. Exotics, perfumes, and drugs were brought, which the slaves carefully tried to administer to him,—but he would not allow them to get nigh to him. Those who stood by his side vainly tried to discern what so singularly terrified him. . . . but they could not see me. I stood immovably there before him,—terrible memories surging through me;—oh, I suffered. And now, death was fast upon him; a terrible war was being waged between the material and the spiritual. He now knew the truth of things invisible,—he realized the enormity of his heinous sins,—he remembered me—and the sin of Desire; and he was tortured as though demons were tearing at his very soul. He hated me, for he had sinned by me—and his evil desires had not been gratified. And what grief is more keenly bitter to man than to have his destined victim to elude his ravenous claws! And Herod realizing the punishment awaiting him—caused by a wish which had not been gratified—writhed in agony and woe. All the sins of his life appeared before him,—and I was the sharpest dagger of all. His mouth filled with blood. His dim eyes bespoke excruciating anguish.

“Devils! Woman! I see ye . . . go! . . . go . . . Curses be upon you all! . . . Oh—oh! . . . Ye hideous faces! . . . Ye fiendish women . . . go! . . . don’t—don’t . . . torment me—GOD! FIRE! SMOKE! PAIN—! . . .” And roaring aloud, trying to grasp me,

he fell back on his couch before the constrained and amazed audience—dead. His guilty soul was fled.

Away! . . . whither! . . . away I sailed,—a wind moaning,—a heavy mist falling with sorrow over the Earth. His soul was gone . . . and yet, who had been the instigator of his “greatest” sin, which has been chronicled down through ages of war and turmoil, hate and bloodshed, religion and hypocrisy—but Satan? And who acted as the tool, who seduced and sought the “King’s” death the most—but me! Of that I will no more dwell upon—Truth is hard. Only let me add that the world is in darkness;—it willingly chooses the dark; it prefers lies to truth, flattery to candidness, and impurity to morality. And Christ seemingly failing to save some—how can I expect to help?

Away,—years perhaps to pass in sorrow,—grief inexpressible was to be my portion. But do not complain, poor soul, thy sins were blacker than night; thou shalt work towards Heaven, trusting in the “King” for help.—And in no one could I have placed a more surely-to-be-rewarded trust than in this King, Who is a vivifying River of Life to those who will drink in His graces, Who is a flower from which permeates the greatest of all sweet fragrance—supereminent Love, Who is the one Oasis in the desert of the world, in which is the evergreen palm of Sublime Concern, the luscious fruit of Everlasting Love, the inexhaustible fountain of Perpetual Life, and the restful sod whereon the weary sinner may place his head, and—REST. . . .

CHAPTER IX.

“THE ENCIRCLING SPIRIT-WORLD.”

I WILL not attempt to portray or to narrate all that I experienced and saw in this place of most hopeful torture. Were I to try to do so I should fail. For there were millions of poor souls in this abode of regenerating work and anguish. I will narrate only several scenes which I saw and experienced, thereby depicting that the works of this existence are to be recognized and remembered—not only remembered, but deeply meditated with devout fear upon. Not that only fear should keep the mortal from sinning, but the love of God alone. “Fear God,” cry the priests and preachers; “Love God,” say I. God is pure Love. He wishes to be loved, not feared. “*Perfect love casteth out fear.*”

A man is upon a cot dying. The tortures of dissolution are terrible to behold. He writhes in the utmost of human agony; he suffers the keenest mortal pain; but moreover—this is as naught compared with the spiritual pain he suffers. Remembrance stings, Remorse burns. With his brain reeling, his smarting eyes, bloody and glazed, staring from their red, swollen sockets, his body seemingly adrift on a bloody sea, hun-

dreds of hammer-strokes knocking incessantly with his cranium, he sees a pallidly wan face staring at him—a face more vividly horrible than that of a petrified corpse; a face whose hollow eyes betoken inward pain; whose somewhat vindictive smile tells of deep wrong; whose hair seems as it were of luminous, condemning blood. Nothing real (as man literally accepts the term) is this,—a spirit of torture is she. The man stares aghast at her,....terror freezes his blood,.... he raves in incoherent gutturals. To him a sea of clotted blood envelopes her,—sable clouds roll lam-bently around her almost transparent form. She raises her arms....points accusingly to a seemingly bloody wound at her heart, at a seeming Mark upon her Form . . . and she continues these pantomimic gestures without cessation, dolorous love and irrepressible regret deeply wounding her.

“Deliah! . . . spirit! . . . uh—huh—ug—ug! . . .” he shouts, tearing at, trying to grasp, this intangible apparition. His vocal chords become firmer; his nerves wax stronger;—the trepid Soul is about to leave. Again, distinctly in the sepulchral accents of the most fearful death, he cries:

“Deliah! Spirit! . . . take from my . . . soul . . . those awful eyes! Take from me....the....blame! No more....no more can I—I endure....this pain. Go!” And he forcibly raises himself to a sitting posture and beats wildly upon the air— “Go . . . to the place where thy crimes cause thee to be....torment not an innocent....man!” Thus he tries to console and blinden his awakened conscience—but he fails.

“Go!....cursed spirit, who seduced me to sin.... Cursed be thou! Go!” He pauses. His eyes dilate in constrained terror, then fearfully, timorously he speaks:

“She speaks! I won her....caused her to sin.... and killed her!....Ha—ha! I am the cause of her grief! I!....I!” He pauses reflectively.... then leaps out of his cot, tearing his long gray hair, and cries: “Yes! I see!....I know!....She loves me? I want not her love. To hell....may God....so forever torture thee. True, I won her....killed her—ha Ha-ha-ha! O ye devils! . . . Ha-ha-ha!—the thunder rolls . . . and roars in wrath; consuming flame comes . . . *rolling . . . tearing . . . burning . . .* over me. O hellish conflagration!—Yes!—I killed her . . . the blood—drips from my hand! . . . She knows, —she bears the Mark,—and I am glad . . . Oh—oh—oh—oh!”—And with an inhuman moan of frenzied pain . . . he falls—and is lost.

The spirit, who is paying the penalty of love’s sinful joys, seeing her earthly lover die, go into hell, suffers great, acute pain,—and, moaning in petitioning prayer, she sails away. *And I prayed for her,—and I comforted and consoled her.*

Now who will say the tortures of the dying sinner, of the soul in pain, are not just and true? And, know you, people of To-day, that oft-times the “ranting” of a dying creature is not ranting at all, but terrible truth. What one of you will dare to deny that not phantasms of waning brain, but true, vivid realities, are these “ghosts” seen by them in the hour of death?

At death the brain is acute, the perception is keen, the memory is immortal,—for at death does not the sinner reveal deeds of darkness unguessed done in years gone by! Ah, at death memory stings and remorse burns. At death a pure, unsullied soul, though somewhat timorous at the nearness of its exit from this world to enter the Next, is in tremulous, expectant joy. The approaching joy overwhelmingly fills its soul,—the thought of being soon with the sweet Cause of All causes it to effervesce in delicious anticipation. Let the immortal Pope express his idea of the pure soul at death in this inspired poem:

“Vital Spark of heavenly flame,
Quit, oh, quit this mortal frame!
Trembling, hoping, lingering, flying—
Oh, the pain, the bliss of dying!
Cease fond nature, cease thy strife,
And let me languish into life!

“Hark! they whisper; angels say,
‘Sister Spirit, come away!’
What is this absorbs me quite,
Steels my senses, shuts my sight,
Drowns my spirit, draws my breath!
Tell me, my Soul, can this be death?

“The world recedes, it disappears,
Heaven opens on my eyes, my ears
With sounds seraphic ring:
Lend, lend me your wings! I mount, I fly:
O grave! where is thy victory?
O death! where is thy sting?”

“The mortal body does possess an immortal Soul, dominated by Will; this Soul is a Germ of Life sent

from God to Earth, and by Work to obtain Immortality. Susceptible of everything, this impulsive Spirit works either upwards or downwards. And when retrograded it must redeem itself. There is a hell for the retrograded soul—the Hell of Memory and Remorse; there is no Hell of Fire. If the Soul descends to hell it must destroy hell. Love is its essence—pure, sinless love—Love that overcomes sin and death, Love that of it makes an angel. The old gods are dead, they are false; of the thirty thousand gods not one is true; they are not immortal with Love; the New God lives and He should never die—the true Christ. He offers not innocent children to His Deity, He makes not woman the slave of man—*for He is Love*. Taught by Him we can raise our Soul to Angel, perform stupendous wonders, raise the dead, control the elements, and sail aloof to Heaven.”

This essay was being read by Kritick, the private reviewer of a Roman Christian. It was in his study—a soft, lovely place, filled with flowers. The author, a young, wealthy, but good Christian, a disciple of Christ, listened to the reviewer’s criticism. The reviewer was a cynical, self-opinionated, well-informed man, venerable in appearance, but jealous of inspired writings. His aim was to attract the people of Rome, but his feeble, flamboyant writings were entirely ignored,—the writings of Marcellus eagerly read.

“The mortal body does possess an immortal soul—a teaching thou didst learn from that usurper of Nazareth when thou wast in Judea. Bosh! The same thing did Plato and Pythagoras vainly rant about,—all

foolishness. 'Tis ridiculous imagery. Should be, 'the body possesseth life—a keen spirit which revels in the arms of woman!' Ha-ha-ha!" His wrinkled face grew red, and he rubbed his hands, reading the MS., which lay on a table. "'Sent by God;—sent by sexual joys—the God of Rome, it should be. A God! A big Spirit of Fire—rant!'" He read on—" 'Love is its essence—pure, sinless love;' why 'tis the veriest wishy-washy diatribe. '*Pure, sinless love!*'—there is no such thing; strike that out; 'twill make thee the laughing-stock of all Rome. Think of Mistress Eudora, the courted and flattered courtesan, reading that! Why, she would be hurt! 'Love' "—his cracked voice rang—" 'is a fire of the blood, which makes man and woman angelic; love is essentially opposed to serene pureness.'—Why, thou art insane; thou knowest that for thine old mistress thou didst have no pure love, a 'sinless love!' Wilt thou tell me that that amour was allied to thy better self—which thou dost call Love? Nay, see here, continue thy rant, thy rhapsodical harangue; 'tis flighty. Settle down to substantial facts; don't try to 'elevate' Rome. Thou fool! And—Great Cæsar! Dost thou want the populace to bring Him here to Rome? Thou silly quack! Raise the dead—utterly impossible; perform miracles—yes, if thou callest jugglery it,—but don't practice legerdemain here for Christian miracles,—I shall reveal thy trickery. That is the grossest flight of silly, turgid imagination! Why, thou wilt be slain if thou bringest the new King of the Jews to Rome,—Cæsar will have thee swallowed by the large, fat lioness, by Minerva he will. And I

shall help to have thee done away with;—by Cæsar's big toe, I will. Oh, destroy this, Marcellus; it will bring trouble on thee! The old gods satisfy Rome—they are as good as any god. Tell Rome that there is but one kind of love—the angelic revelling, the vicious, amorous sin! Tell Rome that; tell Rome to let Woman stay in her place, as men's toy—for she likes it—and if thou must teach Christianity, don't write this trash which thou dost call 'inspired.' ” He gave the young genius the MS. “ Marcellus, I tell thee the truth. I want thee not to be slain by the glances of women, and at last in the arena. Rome won't stand, Sin won't stand thy rubbish. Destroy that. If thou must, teach of Christ, but not as a purely loving, miracle-working God. Teach mediocral platitudes if thou must philosophize. Love as a pleasure is good, as a psychic force—bah! That effusion is execrable trash,—'twould do credit to the Man of Nazareth whom thou dost believe a God. Destroy that—thou knowest lust is not holy; lust is love. Rant of the new God, but retain thy sense. I know what is good, what Rome likes. Show me a love in Rome that is what thou callest pure! ”

“ Well,” said the author, growing perplexed by the quacks of this venerable duck, “ what thou dost say of love is true—people do not love, they sin—if I write more commonplace——”

“ That is it! ” interjected the old man, smiling idiotically, “ commonplace fiction, free from moralizing, full of risque situations, acuminated with witty retorts, is high-class writing. The public will from it draw

lessons, will hearken to thee;—but. . . .destroy that essay; 'tis untrue. Write if thou wilt,—and if thou dost want fame put up the great men in satirical, ridiculous caricature,—criticise them in common parlance, be vulgar even. . . .and thousands of copyists shall be required to copy thy works for the populace—and thou shalt have fame, not notoriety.”

I was there. I, a Spirit, spoke to him by thought vibrations; for I helped all mortals coming within my radius. This episode happened about thirty years after my terrible demise. And I relate it for the benefit of the modern World.

“Love is of the Soul. God is Love. Lust is an animal passion not affiliated with Love. Tell all men to give up lust for pure love to become angels. Write solidly, conscientiously,—and listen not to bigoted critics and readers. Brave all storms of prejudiced opinions; tell the hard truth at all hazards, caring naught for the ephemeral applause of men. But be true, compassionate, and charitable. Let inspiration flow from thee, not tainted by self-love. But tell, proclaim pure love,—Christ and His Spiritual Power and Love!”

He thought thus, knowing not of, “heedless of the encircling spirit world, which, though unseen, is felt, and sows in us all germs of pure and world-wide purposes.”

“Thou art sceptical, prejudiced, not spiritual,” said Marcellus; “thou dost not want mine original tales to eclipse thine; thou materialist, thou art opposed to all Good. Thou wouldst have me pander to the lust of Rome. Decry me in the Forum to thine heart’s con-

tent. I enjoy it. Thy declamations enhance me in the eyes of Rome. Thou dost really give me some good ideas, but—I shall neither destroy nor change this. Miracles are possible; and in spite of Cæsar the New God shall be made known.”

“Thou wilt not,” cried Kritick, tears of wrath rolling from his eyes, “thou dost disregard ME, the greatest writer of our age, me, who knows men—more than thou, thou Christian stripling. Thou hadst best go to thy mother’s breast, not try to sail aloof on the dipteral Angel of Delusion, whose wings are—nothing. I advertise thee? Nay, I shall make thee appear the most grotesque thing in Rome; I shall construe thy writings wrongly; I shall show all defects; aye, I shall make them; I shall call thee visionary;—aye, all fair damsels shall look on thy form with loathing, and thou shalt have a hard time. There is naught in thine inane trash!—’Tis rubbish. My grand pasquinades will kill thee.”

“Shut up, Kritick,” cried Marcellus, laughing. “If it were not for the fun of it I would discharge thee. Thou are prejudiced. An inner voice even tells me not to listen to thee. But, Kritick, do not let prejudice overrule thy senses. If the teaching of the Christ convert the world, thy voice will soon be still. For any Christian can see the hideous feet of the sceptical, critical peacock, who sees no other’s feathers save his own. And if in future ages critics should manage to exist they will doubtless be as thou—a reincarnation of Zoi-lus over again. Kritick, thou hast little chance of getting to Heaven! Thou poor type of man, thou

hast truly made a sorry thing of thyself in combating truth—truth as expressed to one by....an inner voice.”

A type of To-day! And many whose writings we condemned, who are “excoriated by the critics,” are really inspired;—hence the ill-will of the modern “Kritick.”

I saw two souls suffering in desolate pain. They were in this “fire,” suffering the pangs of remorse; they had been here for a long time. While on earth they had heinously and greatly sinned. These two creatures died, strange as it may seem, repenting. They left a little child on the earth, and it grew up suffering the sneers and rebuffs of the “superior” creatures who were born in the wedlock of the body—(perhaps not of the Soul). But these “legitimate children of Law and God,” being born of wedded bodies (no matter whether the souls of their parents were or not) were and are deemed superior;—consequently, as is invariably the case, this “illegitimate aberration of the human race, a thing godless,” was dubbed and spat upon—spat upon, as was then and is now the case, by beings morally inferior, lewd in mind, godless of heart, and brainless. Yet this is the fiat, whether just or unjust, that has gone forth, instigated by man’s majestic will infallible. And it is obviously practiced, causing these unfortunates to cower in pitiful shame, to suffer poignantly, to despise and loathe themselves—and finally to reproach God, saying, “O God, if Thou art equitable why dost Thou place me here? Why am I ridiculed,

mocked, and despised? Why was I not born as others are? Thou art cruel, unjust!" Yet is God the author of the evil? No, the law of Nature must needs work till the time of its cessation comes. God in His Justice can deviate from no fixed path, nor change a just rule to suit or please an individual. And Nature, taking its course, things strange, seemingly unreal and unjust, happen. May God be blamed for the "disgraced" child's wrongs? No; only humanity—pure, godlike, charitable humanity is to blame. And "humanity," born in "wedlock," sneering at this child, merits its hate. Hence is it any wonder that many of the unfortunates become misanthropists and sinners? BUT THE CODE OF HUMANITY IS NOT THE CODE OF A JUST GOD.

As I narrated, such a child was left on earth by these two souls. For every sin caused by sneers and ill-treatment on account of its illegitimacy, which the child committed, these two souls suffered. But they prayed for the Soul, helped it, comforted it, atoning for their delinquency in sending an innocent soul out on a cruel earth, not born of God's sacred institution—Marriage. The two souls were nearing perfection, but they awaited the Soul of the child. Justice must needs always be done. And duties left undone always incur a penalty. At last the body of the child died; the Soul listened to this appeal:

"O Soul of the child who was made to suffer for our sin, forgive us. Ere we can have our peace, ere we can wholly rest, we must needs obtain thy pardon; we love thee and we want thy love. Thou art saved,

thou art not in a tenth part of a sorrow such as ours. For thy sins thou hast mostly atoned for on earth. Oh, forgive us, that soon we may be in the joy of the Lord, in Love supernal, in Light eternal. Oh, we humbly beseech thee to be clement unto us. As thou art in mercy, forgive us! Though by our sin, for which we have dearly paid, whereby thou wast brought from the Womb Eternal, imprisoned in clay and wronged, yet forgive us. No mercy greater than God's is wot of, yet we must thy pardon obtain. Forgive! and lift us from this suffering most bitter, this fire unquenchable, to a place of mitigation, from whence, by the Power of God, we shall soon, if thou forgive us, be lifted. Then a world environed by supernal glory, whose ecstatic joys are not delusive joys, whose Ruler is the GREAT LOVE, will be our home. Forgive us, oh, forgive us that soon to this world—where untruth, lies, sin, and shame have no place—we may go. There we could be in dazzling brilliancy, in surpassing joy, and be impassible to pain. Soul, we beseech thee to pardon us”

A sweet face radiant with forgiving love was turned to these two souls, and in the sweetly clarion accents of a bell, this angel answered:

“Sister spirits, I wholly forgive. Had you lawfully loved I would have committed less sin; little have I to pay. Satisfaction is the Law—minute, perfect, exact Satisfaction. A life for a life, a love for a love, a hell for a hell,—as ye mete to others, so shall ye be meted to. A wronged Soul can mete vengeance on its

wronger; 'tis the exact natural Law. The unrepentant vengeful Spirit can wield a scepter of terrific vengeance—all in the grand immeasurable Justice of Things. You did me little wrong,—yourselves ye wronged the most. I forgive you. Oh, it is grand to forgive. The God who liveth on the earth will teach this Lesson of Pardon, do away from evil men's hearts the Law of Revenge. He is on the world, this Holy One, and loves Man with an exceeding Love of surpassing Unselfishness....and what will Man do?" A devout and reverent love shone from the sweet, forgiving spirit's countenance. "I see that ere short time pass, He will be in a garden shedding fiery tears of pain....and sweating drops of blood—all for unthankful mankind. Aye, aye, the mundane sphere shall be marked as no other sphere was ere marked or ere shall be. . . The blood of a God will flow on the soil! . . . The burning tear-drops will ustulate the stones!. . . And ever, so long as the world will roam, the stars around it roll, in the sight of angels and of devils, it is *tainted*, tainted with the stigma of an unrewarded Love, a desecrated Blood, and most of all . . . a GOD cast aside! Spirits of ye dead, He to whom many of you will owe redemption will be spat upon, scourged, and nailed to a tree, as though He were a malefactor—but He is a God Divine! Thus is Love always scourged,—and what a terrible vengeance it does bring on itself! Pray for the souls of mortals, that they may listen to Him. Follow me, rise nearer Heaven, where soon we will stay—the glorious world of a myriad colored lights, of beauties, godly and divine. Come!" And with a beautiful

smile, it sailed upwards, away. The Law was satisfied, Justice was done.

How true it is that Love avenges itself in a marvelously exact manner. Love made me suffer. Love gave me joy. Alighting on a rainbow pinion I hearkened to the surging music of the spheres, it was Love; I sank into the fragrant bosom of a flower; I saw Love;—I rested by meandering streams,—the murmur of waves was—Love,—Love, Love—how I loved it, how I enjoyed it, how I suffered in it! I prayed for Jardac, besought God to let me be his Salvation. I longed to work for him, to be by him,—I resolved that I would not go to Heaven without him, I would wait for him, hoping to serve him. O Love, thou tyrant of souls, thou Sweetness mixed with pain! Years passed, years of work, years in which I helped mortals on earth, all in the mission of Love.

A soft, languorous wind blows, and on it is the scent of flowers in bloom. The river winds amorously around the mountain; and flowers bend their gentle heads down, down to kiss the lips of water. Luna's beams shine forth in brightness, showing the beauty of nature, the glories of summer,—but the effulgent beams vainly try to penetrate the shadow of a tree.

“I love thee—love none but thee,” says a modulant, rich, persuasive voice.

Two figures sit by the river—the figure of a sweet, pure girl, the figure of a manly man.

“The flowers have their mates, we see,” he says,

“the river loves its mountain; the birds they sing in melody, hearkening to the fountain. Miriam, thou dost know my heart is thine,—thine only. I swear to thee by the moon that shines, by Nature, by all thunder, I swear to thee by Love and wine—that I will be thine forever. Angel, Miriam, I leave my costly palace, my gardens, my birds and friends; I leave them all to come to thee—thou a simple maiden.”

“I know,” she murmurs, nestling close to him, “and do I not love thee?”

“Thy love has not been proven,” he says, kissing the sweet upturned face, a face that reminds one of a sculptured angel.

“Prove—how shall I prove it,” she replies, kissing him, no thought of evil marring the virginal brightness of her soul. “Thou knowest that I would do anything for thee; I am thine. Take me, let me serve thee, I love none other.”

She flings herself upon him in unreserved love,—he is her angel, her pure sinless being.

“Ah, little Miriam,” he murmurs, holding her to him—“this is love. The wild unrestrained giving of each other, the disregard of virtue, the drinking in of passion; this is love. Never till now have we loved,—thou shalt know and realize the meaning of love. Love is not the single telling of tales, the Platonic unimpassioned song of phlegmatic men—no, love is wild, sinful, lascivious! There is in it no sin—for it is a God and cannot be wronged; no sin canst thou commit in Love. But if thou refuse my desire thou lovest me not, and ’twill be a sin.” His passion encompasses

him, unscrupulous, wicked man that he is. She innocently looks at him askance, somewhat frightened.

“Love,” she murmurs, “not sin—God is good—Love—we dare not sin.”

“Angel, Miriam, my love,” he whispers in her seashell ears; his face grows red; his evil desires stop not at the gate of virtue. She gives a scream, tries to rush from him; he holds her.

“Thou devil,” she hisses.

Innocent, her eyes are opened; pure, her purity is at stake; trusting, one tries to betray her; loving God, one tries to lead her astray:—’Tis the tale of Man and Woman.

He, her lover, was to her a pure, cold, good, gentle man; she knew not the tale of a burning glance, the convulsive clasp of a hand, the hot imprint of a kiss. Love was to her a pure, spotless, never-dying thing. Now—she is tempted. I convey by deep thought and love to her mind the scene of such evil loves, the dark, guilty sin of it, the sequent pain, where love defiled and nude wanders in darkness and fire: I suggest to her pure, holy thoughts—she wants to run away. I pray for her, aid her.

He casts her from him, walks from her in a wronged, broken attitude.

“Go,” says her lover, “go,—let me die. Thou lovest me not.” He seems dejected; he knows how to play on her feelings.

“Love-god—” she cries, flinging herself at his feet—“thou knowest I love thee, would do anything for thee—anything but sin.”

He turns upon her, his eyes blazing with a simulation of anger, his voice choking with restrained sobs.

“Go,” he cries, “or I shall slay thee, false, low thing. I will leave thee, I will die; thou lovest me not.” He rushes to the river, she after him, crying wildly:

“Come—Anthony, love—I am thine—take me—crush me—smell the fragrance of me—and kill me—sin; I will sin for thee, only do not leave me.”

I vainly try to give pure thoughts to her; I cannot—she resists them. Driven frantic, she submits to degradation.

The river sings its evening hymn—the purity of its song finds echo no longer in her heart. Two flowers of a pure white color, immaculate, free of sin, bend together, to tell the tale of how evil men lead weak women to hell—and a dew-drop, a tear of sorrow, drops from the one flower’s eye. The trees moan restlessly—talking the tale of Love. The moon’s beams shine, and they secure a scene that Love shall avenge. The earth’s ears open, hearing a tale that shall wreak a terrific vengeance on the Betrayer.

He turns reluctantly.

“Wilt thou suffer mine embraces—the embraces of heaven? Wilt thou this night not give me kisses only, but sweet nectareous love? wilt thou face yon smiling moon and sin—if thou call love sin? wilt thou let the beating of bosoms tell an untold tale? If thou wilt do this, then I shall live for thee; I will not die.”

She covers her face with her hands in shame; her form trembles; and she falters—

“Yes, if it must—”

“Aye,” he says sternly, “that only is love. Love the tyrant—the god that presses the grapes and drinks the wine.”

He clasps her to him, imprints a hot violent kiss on her forehead.

“Oh, the sweet delight of love,—the pain of the killing sweetness,—the glory of the gods in heaven,—the ending—”

Her conscience cries aloud. But Love, the tyrant, abused, lead astray, forces her to submission. The voices of entreating spirits she heeds not.

“Clouds of vapor, fire and thunder, play havoc in the skies!” I mutely cry, “Trees of earth, winds of space, play havoc on the land! Save the Soul by natural warnings—save the immortal soul!”

Let Nature, let Thunder, let all the forces of the Elements warn them; let the lightning and thunder prevent the goaded submission of the Angel to the Beast. Let spirits of air bewail the sin of evil men in wronging innocent women! . . . And suddenly . . . a huge, sable cloud comes swimming in the dark skies, filled with lightning and thunder, . . . and down falls big drops of cold rain. The trees wail and bend, and twist and writhe; the dark river seethes and rises; and all nature in tumult wars. . . . The storm is passed,—the sin is done; the warnings were of no avail:—Man has degraded Love again.

Thus did I try to help mortals by warnings, promptings, consoling and leading them aright. As I had

sinned, so I now tried to prevent others from sinning,—and when I succeeded I raised myself nearer Heaven, atoning for a sin. As I had led others astray in life, so I now led them aright. “An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth”—is a key to a great truth. *An eye for an eye*:—when we lead others from Light to Darkness, by closing their eye of Truth, and making them blind,—then we must restore that eye—lead them aright again. Hence let the clergymen of To-day beware! *A tooth for a tooth*:—when we take a tooth, take virtue and joy from a soul, we must return it. This is the Law—the Law of Atonement and Satisfaction; and if this is not wanted . . . then the dreadful Law of Vengeance.

Nearly thirty years I passed—years in which a strong attraction drew me downwards to Christ, and many times did I hover near this Saviour,—and O! the joy of His presence was overwhelming! And in these years I suffered from memory,—but as they passed memory of sin decreased, expectation of joy refilled my soul. The pain I suffered, ever decreasing, was purging. I was a Soul of Unrest, a Spirit of Light. Sombrous, sable wings held me up, appalling lurid clouds of emerald and red fire held me down. Chains of remorse weighed, with stern rigor, heavily upon my soul; a crown of thorns—vivid remembrances of lover’s caresses—burned and pricked me with unflinching, merciless, unceasing pain. My hands were manacled—manacled by the remembrance of the sins of the hands. Sibilant whisperings of

dread awe weirdly, with unearthly lamentation, floated in the air and void—whisperings of the memories of sin. A dread, painful, expectant awe, trembling horror held me; and in the dark clouds scenes of sins of yore painted themselves continually in derisive mockery;—in the chaotic clouds of wind and fire were whispered the words of a sacrilegious love. Continually in the ominous, mystic accent of thunder, there dissonantly volleyed in the air and void, the words: “*Yes, I will stay with thee . . . I will love thee.*” And as the whisper of a sneering fiend, there sibilantly, subduedly intonated the air the words: “*Lie down, . . . and I will give thee some of this rich wine, which is sweet, mellow, and fine.*” And anon, loudly and harshly thundered the devilish, soul-torturing words: “*This is Love!*” And the wailing wind with thrilling intensity and irrepressible mockery reiterated the reproduction of the words of Jardac and me, in harsh accents, with sentient mockery. The words, as living devils delighting in this torture, whispered and thundered in continual emulation . . . *And I prayed.* Before my vision in lurid colors of fire at times, when at the places of sinful past there appeared the transmagorias of past actions in vari-colored fire. And Remembrance stung with its keen sting; Remorse gnawed with a pitiless, merciless, gnawing; dole, lonely separation and a keen, pithy sense of lonely incompleteness were ever upon me. Always I prayed—This is “Purgatory,”—that and the grief and the joy before narrated, I experienced. And this great purgatorial pain caused me to pray also for other souls,

and praying for them I offered comfort and good suggestions to them,—and I consoled all souls coming within my radius, helping them upward to Heaven.

* * * * *

Onward with lightning speed and velocity! On through air, through colors of glory,—through storms and restless seas . . . to Rome. A brilliant sunset was the glittering beauty before me. The sun had just sunk, and sending up his vari-colored rays of dazzling light into long and wavy rifts of fleecy and billowy interwoven clouds, caused it all to seem as some grand picture of an angel-artist.

“*Pulchrum, solis occasus!*” was the enthusiastic cry of genuine admiration of the children of Rome in this evening.

Gaze at the sunset:—see how in columnar shafts of silver and gold he transforms the grey clouds into still, fleecy billows of red, crimson, and gold. See the sun slowly sinking . . . slowly,—slowly—his magnificent beams, a benison of heaven, wane and decrease. In the west there yet remains sufficient glory to dazzle the weak human eye. Across the cerulean void stretch two long, wavy clouds, flashing with iridescent rainbow glory, . . . slowly they move—like to the visible wings of some grand Invisible Form;—moving restlessly like the waves of a sea lightly disturbed, they hover as angels guarding the sinking sun. Slowly the silvery fleece becomes a dull grey,—and a feeling of dreadful, expectant awe fills the bosom of one. Slowly he retracts and reclaims his lavish beams, and he alone remains in glory—a king . . .

the blue distant horizon a daïs, . . . the rainbow colors of prismatic glory a halo—a halo worthy of any king. Reposing on a bed of pink and golden clouds, a glorious *Hosanna* and *Gloria* to heaven, with a smiling, lovely farewell, shedding a few teardrops of meteor-like flame, . . . he sinks—sinks from human vision,—an Emblem of Death. The sun, emblem of life you call him, say I, is the Emblem of Death:—he sinks from sight,—dies . . . to rise again to a new life; to rise with a fresher and more brilliant glory than in setting.

Such was the sunset at Rome the eve I migrated thence. The old palaces, the huts, and the Tiber, the circus and theatres, and the Temple of Capitoline Jupiter, all were bathed in Sol's brilliancy. I gazed sadly at this wicked city, the "Mother of Nations," and I prayed for the souls that were being lost, and in To-day, when I gazed at Rome, I pray for it. As I gazed at the twenty-nine highways leading from Rome then, I gaze at the highways now. The highways to Rome were of rich, large slabs, and by it were magnificent tombs of shining marble incrustated with massive ornaments of bronze and gold. . . . Rome was sinful; it is yet. Rome was rich, its highways being grand; it is rich yet with the world's trash, baubles that men have placed their lives—and souls—in jeopardy to get. Rome is like a dissolute youth—tiring of the pleasure of one sin it assumes another. The way to Rome now is by giving Peter's Pence to the Pope—that is the only glorious way. And to-day the words and bulls of the Popes fly throughout the

world, as the edicts of wicked emperors did then,—and To-day there stands statues of saints for veneration instead of idols; incense, mammon, lust, and and hypocrisy still remain, and will remain,—till the End.

Operated upon by some potent attraction, I descended into a large villa. I was in a saloon, and before me . . . was one—one for whom my being ardently longed,—for whom I felt a terrible, separated love. I saw Jardac! . . . O! what unutterable joy—and sorrow—were mine.

The saloon was a vast apartment,—the tessellated floors were of differently colored marble, forming fantastic designs, cleverly executed and skillfully worked. In the center of the room was a pool of scented water, which came from a rippling fountain in the center of the pond. Various lights alternately shone upon the fountain, causing it to flash with golden color, anon with a thousand prismatic hues. Huge green palms and esculent fruits, rich white and saffron lilies which grew from thick, tangled, slushy moss, dazzling sapphirine irises and sweet, star-shaped anemones, and over and around all, creeping and pendulous vines which crept down to the marble floor, all picturesquely grew around the border of the shimmering, fragrant pond out of marble stands which were elaborated by work of sea-shells,—and from the foliage sculptured, classical faces looked forth. Above this pond was a huge, high dome;—the interior of it was carved and painted so skillfully that the scenery was delusive. One could have imagined that the scenes were real, not the

pictures designed by a brain. Around the dome were suspended lights of various colors, in lamps of finely wrought gold incrustated with jewels. Huge onyx columns supported the dome, being around the pond in picturesque stateliness. Around the pond were divans and stands of expensive make and odd design. The somnific scent of tuberose pervaded the place, and a soft, low melodious euphony echoed throughout the halls and corridors leading from this saloon.

In the midst of all this rare, spectacular, fascinating wealth of beauty, were two forms bathing in the scented pool. I gazed at Jardac. His thoughts were envenomed with sin. And loving him so dearly, oh, I keenly suffered. Memories bitter became stronger,—the fuel added to the flame. Oh, oh, no mortal, for 'tis beyond the power of man to conceive,—could give a microscopic guess at the agony, the fire I there endured. The scene I saw was obnoxious to me,—I rebelled and writhed against this pain surpassing all purgatorial pain. For once I rebelled against the torture. In the ebullition of grief which I could neither suppress nor control, I cried:

"No more! O God, no more. Thou art cruel,"—but I knew that all was utterly just.

This was as it were the vortex of my purgatory, the quintessence of my pain. Baleful was the potent effect it had upon me. I felt—no words can adequately describe the sensations of pain, joy, sorrow, and compassionate pity that took possession, as it were, of me. Yet how fruitful was my visit:—*I saved him from sin!* And that was the reward of my mission.

The person that was with Jardac was a woman—a woman of the world—a typical woman of To-day. She was fair in body—but black, to speak metaphorically, in soul. She had hair—a sheen of burnished gold,—dark, deep-set brown eyes,—a little sensual mouth,—and a *petit*, well-developed, graceful form. Jardac looked somewhat older than when we had been together,—but he bore his age well. He was about fifty years of age, yet he looked as if he were no more than thirty. He had still that voluptuous, Herculean form; that virile vigor and strength admirable; a darkly handsome face; and that unexcelled demeanor and haughty mien. Still I loved him. I loved him not as earthly children love;—I loved him with a pure, purged, most holy and true love. And loving him, I deeply suffered,—oh! and heartily, sorrowfully pitied him. He was staining and decreasing that vital life—oh, could I only save him! My love, my love, oh, my blind love—cease! You hurt yourself, and wrong the Holy God.

He and the woman Flora disported themselves, then merrily laughing and jocose in humor, they nimbly sprung, with water dripping from their thin, clinging tunics, out of the pond. Jardac plucked a fruit from a tree, and began to eat it,—and then he and Flora went to a large divan, made artistically of ivory and ebony and covered with feathery cloth and silken pillows,—and drinking wine, the music becoming soft and low—like to the symphonic melody of water-lilies making love—they kissed each other. Even so had he once kissed me. He gazed at her be-

witching face, at her dazzling eyes, and fell more under the luring spell of sin. And what spell is more potent in producing evil than the spell of a woman's beguiling temptation? An evil woman can destroy nations, corrupt creeds and create a Hell that man never could. . . . Ah, Flora, if thou hadst a growing spark, I would have prayed for thee, but a demon shone from thine eyes so seductive and brown; and there I was in my pain, seeing mine own love retroceding further from God. And, oh, how I did fervently pray—and my prayers did pierce the clouds. When they even gazed into each other's eyes I felt a smart of pain; and I did rejoice when she jumped from the divan and jangled a tambourine and danced.

She spun on her toes like a giddy snow-ball; she languidly swayed to and fro as a pliant lily just born to love and to live; she swam through the air like a gay butterfly; and she smiled, she coquetted, and—she stopped suddenly. . . . But of brief duration was this charming inactivity, . . . a loud, crashing sound reverberated through the saloon, . . . a long drawn, sonorous wailing of viols, mingled with lutes, cymbals, drums,—and the soft sound of varying chimes, then sounded, growing louder and louder, wilder and wilder. And in the crashes of these entrancing, ravishing strains, she approached Jardac, . . . the music suddenly fell, growing sweet and subdued, . . . Jardac arose, grasped her warm, full arms, . . . more passionate and riotous grew the sentient tunes, . . . he entwined his godly arms about her shining bosom,

. . . and around they flew in a giddy maze. After several minutes the music tumultuously crashed; they stopped and separated. A soft, almost inaudible melody floated about them, . . . she paused on tip-toe, put her delicate hand to her sea-shell ears, bent her head in attentiveness, as though listening to an esoteric message conveyed to her in the music. . . . A blare, . . . a wailing, . . . a screaming, . . . a clashing of cymbals and tambourines, . . . and away this houri flew, as on clouds of pink flame, . . . she beckoned a sweet farewell, smiled, . . . a radiating light of variable hues shone on her, . . . and in strains so loud that the walls seemed to burst in the straining tension, this seducing creature of ravishing fairness disappeared. This was the way my love wiled away his hours!—in a veritable harem,—oh . . . God! . . .

Oh, God, deliver all souls who ever implicate themselves in such a heart-rending affair! I felt terribly downcast and solitary; nothing but drear torture seemed before me;—as much as these earthly creatures enjoyed their unchaste amusements, so much did I loathe and suffer for them—*for I loved him so!*

At this juncture, when Flora disappeared, five beings, clad in diaphanous gauze of dazzling maroon and gold, with diamond stars glittering and flashing prismatically in their jet black hair, came dancing into the room, music loud and merry vibrating most tune-fully in the scented air. As they came in, humming a ravishing tune, a panel of onyx and gold, which was at the top of one of the magnificent piles supporting the dome, opened . . . and a huge, fiery, blazing sun

whirled out from it and took position in the central space of the dome, . . . and in succession there emerged other balls and stars of colored light, which in order formed themselves into a systematic orbit, and whirled and hissed around the central sun, which gloriously, dazzlingly chameleoned every second. This was Jardac's invention. Thus this deceiver of women, this wealthy quixotic fool enjoyed his idle hours. Here he and other worthy friends would often disport themselves with wanton women, but now he was the only man there—and a nice specimen he was! He closed his eyes in a dreary languor, but suddenly opened them, for the lamps which were suspended in air suddenly became extinguished. And at that moment the maidens of rare southern beauty sprang into the pool and began to gracefully move in the water, and there pealed through the apartment a loud, shrill bugle call, . . . the unseen musicians ceased their heretofore thrilling music, . . . a viridescent illumination was thrown on the lake, . . . and there appeared in the center of the pool, under the fountain, a woman—superbly fair, voluptuously fascinating, nonchalant and languidly gracious, and glorious in her dazzling smile.

She was clothed in a garment of loose gauze embroidered with silver; on her auburn hair, which was as bronzed gold hanging loosely about her, was a diadem of electrified glory, which scintillated and shone like miniature stars. She raised her sculptured hand with grace, and like unto the music of sweetly tuned bells, her delicious voice melodiously floated in the air:

“Nymphs of the water, who is your king,
To whom you do gladly tributes bring?”

And in unison the others sang:

“Who is our king but Jardac our lord,—
Who from our sweet lips gets his reward!”

As their voices died away, above the pool, in the dome, the stars formed themselves into the words:

“Love—Divine Passion of the soul—
ENJOY IT.”

All surveying, with smiles of rapture on their fair faces, the beautiful spectacle before them, they formed themselves in two files:—and the water dripping in argently sparkling drops from her, the queen stood in the center, . . . then sang:

“Come to me, Jardac, love,—
Come to Viola, Dove;
Gaze in mine eyes,
See yonder skies;
Lie in mine arms,
Drink in Love’s charms—
The charms of passion, flame, and fire,
Bewildering joys of Love’s desire.
O! the wild grandeur of Love’s seething bliss,
Come in the water and give me a kiss . . .”

While capriciously smiling a lascivious smile of seductive, unchaste desire . . . the stars and sun suddenly and noiselessly whirled into circular form, then into the opening, and the onyx panel with a grating noise moved back to its original place. Jardac then

left the couch, and moved to the pond, preparatory to entering, when—I could stand it no longer,—if I could only appear to him! . . . to save him! If I could only form material so as to communicate to him,—for he was too earthy now to receive spirit-warnings. If I would speak by material expression—my Will acted—I formed about ME atoms of color and material: thousands and millions and billions of atoms quickly formed in me materially, . . . and . . . I was in a gorgeous butterfly! A proof is this of the predominance of Spirit over Matter. I was a butterfly as there was perhaps none ever before,—in colored, brilliant beauty it was a perfect marvel. Two wings of luminous, royal purple, covered as it were with scintillant dust, with six oval spots of gold, ribbed by dark crimson and phosphorescent veins, were its; it had a body with the most artistic, fascinating, yet repulsive exterior covered with a brownish fur,—and two eyes—eyes from which shone red, lurid fire—were in the head; yet those eyes greatly failed to show what grief unendurable was mine. A dissonant buzzing, wailing cry issued from the mouth. It attracted Jardac’s attention. There was a luminous haze, bloody in color, about me. And plainly seeing a bug thus, a sense of prolific superstitious awe held him for several moments spellbound in terrified amazement. He fearfully scrutinized the “fly,” and puissant was the fright I evoked in him. On the verge of familiar sin, the sun of enjoyment shining fully upon him, I came, a sable, strange macula, terrifying him. Gracefully, as a swan sails over quiescent water, it sailed around in

the air, the "bz-z-ing" issuing from the throat, fire being emitted from those ghastly eyes. By the sheer necessity of fright, he timorously muttered:

"By . . . the god Jupiter, what . . . hellish thing is this?"

He was not answered, . . . the creatures about him were mute . . . His fright lessening to some extent, although believing and knowing it to be an aberration of the bug family, he approached me. Confined in flesh, how could he know me? I was only some strange, unreal bug to him, yet . . . in his bosom his heart palpitated apprehensively, . . . a burning sensation surged through him, . . . his vision became somewhat dazed, and his brain dizzy and obtuse. Precipitately, instinctively, he nervously seized a large fan and vainly endeavored to beat me to the marble floor. But I eluded every frantic hit, . . . I seemed invulnerable and formidable.

"This—this," he testily asseverated, his limbs quivering and shaking, "is some damned . . . unreal—thing!" By their expression, I knew that the beautiful creatures of unchastity implicitly coincided with him. And naturally, for they were his paid chattels of amusement.

As the seconds sped on his brain became partially clearer. He thought the bug a real, yet strange creature; yet in spite of his inward comments, a sensation of timorous and tremulous awe penetrated and stung him. Then, with courage that was laudable, he rushed to this bug;—it flew about him,—and with those burning eyes of gory torture, a sanguine look

on the face, the luminous haze quivering, I flew into his open arms. . . . The eyes stared into his! As though fascinated magnetically, he stood still,—one could audibly hear his every breath and see his palpitating bosom . . .

“By the gods,” he cried, after recovering from this temporarily inert state,—“whatever creature this can be—it hurts me,”—and in perplexed despair,—“and . . . *I feel a part of myself in it!*”

The same inexplicable sensation I myself acutely experienced.—Love in darkness and light is One: glorious in transcendent joy in Light, odious in the most bitter pain in Darkness. And those who asking, “What is love?” being answered in that worldly phrase, “A sensation of the heart, a fascination which rises at beauty and dies,” are answered by a false reply. Love is the making perfect, the joining One, of two souls. The same One in Hell as in Heaven.

“What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder” is a prolific, appalling, dread command. When two souls meet and are joined while in the flesh (seldom done in To-day), let no one by lies of guile, by seduction, by irreligion, nor by false slanders, part these two,—by making them sin by infidelity, causing them to hate one another. Woe to that person. His fate shall rest in the hand of these two—One. Let him hesitate ere he—or she—wishing to win a fair woman—or a virile man—seduce one of this One to sin, thus parting the perfect!

“Kill it,” cried several of the water beauties in ef-

feminate fear; "don't let it get near us! We are almost naked!"

And with an almost superhuman stroke and access of courage, he hit at it. He struck the material, . . . it instantly atomized and disappeared. He gazed upward, . . . saw naught of the "bug"—but saw ME in my sad state of meritorious work and mutable grief, glaring at him with a piteous, woe-begone sorrow. He saw me with all the excruciating torture and the dread horror and the sentient misery of the Unseen enveloping me. Dark chaotic clouds and red, bloody, luminous flame he saw enveloping my frail, fiery form of Light. And around Me—he, to his amazement, beheld a blazing halo of prismatic, supernatural glory. He in mad frenzy bounded sheerly into the air . . . to reach me. He was ignorant of unseen truths. Perhaps I was a phantom of his fantasy;—such a seemingly awful transparent and fiery thing as that could not be the Nathana of olden days, thought he. He would see . . . He again jumped to me, batted at me, . . . and touched naught but empty air! He fell back, panting, silent, and awe-struck.

"He is not sane," cried one of the creatures in the pool.

He heeded her not. Slowly the truth dawned upon him,—he reluctantly succumbed to it. He knew that this weird, loving thing was Nathana—Nathana with whom he had spent many hours of rapturous joy,—Nathana who had willingly given up Honor, Virtue, Home, and Love for him,—Nathana whom he had sent away with cruel words, with a breaking heart!

Realizing the horror of the position, he reeled backward . . . and fell into the pool. The terrifying perturbation of his mind was stifling. Being caught by these creatures, who loved him for the plenteous delicacies they received from his hands, he gave vent to his feeling.

"Nathana . . . love. Oh—oh—oh! I love thee. Whate'er thou art . . . my soul is thine. Thou sufferest . . . I see, . . . yet I cannot understand! I caused thee to be in pain. Forgive, Love, . . . forgive!" And he stretched out his arms in dissatisfied pitiful longing. Ah, he loved me. He cared naught for any other. At this ebullition of feeling, the creatures gazed at one another apprehensively and jealously.

"O God," I fervently prayed, "let him see the delusive folly of his ways . . . save—save him."

My eyes burned as with unshed tears. All the love of the soul longed for his welfare. Quite suddenly a beaming circular sheen of white and saffron light irradiated the saloon, coming from above. I felt greatly calmed at the sight of this soothing splendor of light. . . . A rattling noise ensued, . . . the marble floor seemed to rise, . . . it hove like the waves of a perturbed sea, . . . and then was still. And, as though crushed by terrific hands, the golden lamps became shattered and fell into a thousand fragments.

"An earthquake!" cried the startled water queen. Terror seized the fickle hearts of these almost soulless creatures.

Jardac suddenly, as though electrified and animated

by a potent, prolific force, utterly bounded into the air . . . fell down below me. His eyes blazing with a fearful, a vivid, and an intense knowledge, compunction gnawing his heart, remorse burning his brain, he cried in a fervid falsetto, yet musical tone:

“Ye bodies of ye devils, beneath which lurk manifold vices, I SEE you! You are skeletons all. Bah! . . . I see the bones white as parchment, . . . and on every one is written ‘*sin*’! The body is naught but dirt,—the color and light gone out in all of them. I see *you*, black, hideous, grinning, more hateful—a thousand times—than the devils in dark Hell! Each one of you should have an exclusive place in the dark abodes of torture. Lust, hate, malice, wantonness, gluttony, and drunkenness are all inscribed upon you. Obnoxious are ye to me;”—and in a vehement wail of self-conviction,—“yet what am I? Begone ye reminders of crime! Begone!” And impelled by the force of the preternatural glare of his eyes, in confusion the girls rushed precipitately from the saloon. Then in a dazed, solemn, low tone, with a weird look of vague awe, Jardac continued slowly, distinctly enunciating the words: “I am in a deep, dark valley Around me are dark trees, each one a sin, . . . they are soft to the touch, and yield a fruit that bewildered the mind with sweetness, but which deadens the Soul; they . . . shut out the sunlight—the sunlight of enlivening Love The thunders roar strangely above me! . . . I love this place. Onward I walk; . . . a steep precipice yawns in fearful, abysmal fury before me A feeling of awe comes upon me, . . . I am

afraid! ! Dark down in those solitary, dreary depths roars a torrent; and the name of the torrent is Despair . . . As though the impending fate of eternal death were predestined, I feel as though forced to go down, invited therein! . . . But a twinkling star is before me, . . . divinely fair—'tis a woman's sweet, entrancing face! ! A ray of hope revived! 'Kiss not the face; let it guide thee to My Light!' I hear a Voice in voluminous menace proclaim. But I heed it not . . . I grasp covetously at the ravishing Star . . . I taste the delicacy of those lips—and . . . ye rattling din of thunder cease your noise!—The waters below in that enormous chasm of protruding menace, howl for me—its just and welcome prey! The star I cast aside, . . . and I fall! Down, . . . down, . . . a huge, sharp point of rock bespeaks itself in bloody, leering hatefulness below me! It is a tooth of some monster . . . waiting for me—a morsel of drear, baked darkness. I fall on its sharp, poisoned fang, . . . my blood is wine! 'Tis joy! The world swirlingly yawns asunder, and flames, invoked by the murder of the star, environ me, . . . and I burn. Fire circles me on every side;—it rises into the air in pyramidal structures of flaming colored glory—Yet the glory is acute pain. And down into the dark, seething waters of eternal blackness falls the once-brilliant star; . . . and it seemingly dies! Death—a dark domed cloud of appalling aspect, hovers over me. . . . Slowly, almost imperceptibly, it descends with a solemn, surging noise, and the confused muffle of thunder vibrates in the distinctly mystic air! Ready to crush me in ravenous,

hungry fury, it writhes,—and quiveringly, suddenly falls!—victoriously it is almost upon my struggling form! My heart beats fearfully,—and my eyes protrude,—yet I love and enjoy this pandemonium. All hope seems fled, . . . ghastly flames of tapering white glory form about me, . . . and “Sin” is written in the heavens. A cry—seemingly that of a devil in his hell—dissonantly rings upon the air: A woman’s wondrous voice! . . . And above me, in the distant heavens, is the Face of the Star. Resuscitated, though in weird, maddened torment, it gazes at me—in Love. I see what I have done; . . . vision fades, . . . Nathana, I love thee—oh, I love thee. Oh, those eyes of beseeching pity, immortal woe, and foreboding of imminent peril! Let that line of pallid torture fade from thine angel’s face, . . . let a sweet, serene smile appear—”

“Only by Love, by thy repentance can it be done,” I cried in joyous appeal.

“How? ? ?” he cried in ardent, anxious questioning.

And as he asked, I gazed to Heaven, and prayed And then, off in a vision of a myriad of lovely flowers, a great Cross shone—its tapering points were of golden flame, its transverse beams of purple and yellow light, and upon it was a Vague Figure—the Figure of a Glorified Being whose eyes smiled in Sorrow, whose nailed Hands helped poor souls to grace—and through the surging music of the odor of the flowers, there came the holy words, “Come to Me, all ye that are labored and are burdened, and I will refresh

you, and lead you aright. . . .” And the Radiant Figure shone with the palpitating glow of an arctic night; it was suffused with the soft lines of a morning’s sunrise light. And this Holy Suffering Form so grand, so bright, so holy in Its empyreal light, grew lofty and grander still. The Figure appeared more Real, grew more Sweet, and the Cross of Sorrow fell away, replaced by Three Stars of Azure Light—the Star of Hope, the Star of Mercy,—the Star of Love. And around the Godly Form that was being transfigured, grew garlands of gems and odorous beings, and all were joined by flashing curves of prism-like flame,—and all around was indescribable radiance, glowing with grandeur, with exalted fire,—and celestial songs were wafted on the waves of heavenly sheen. And the God-like Form rose, with a Sweet Welcoming Smile,—the pricking Crown of Thorns grew dim, and there was a Crown of soft, sweet flowers,—and the bleeding Hands beckoned down—“Come, repent, suffer as did I, and receive the Reward of Love—the Crown of Light.”

“The Christ,” I softly said, bowing down in prayer—“Love,—go to Christ—the suffering God—the loving One, follow Him,—and come to Me.”

The Holy Vision rolled away amid the clangorous melody of spheres,—and I rose, on a billow of cloudy flame.

“Love—to Jerusalem—to Christ.”

And I rose from him—he would be saved. I thank God.

A crash of sweet sound rolled between us—and I was gone

My prayers of almost thirty long, long, sad, dreary, tortured years were to be fruitful—thirty years in which I had worked: prayed, consoled, and helped others, and by this, I was acquiring a glory brighter than any distant sun; and now even Love was saved.—Who will not vehemently, joyfully, gladly exclaim—*“God is good?”*

As lifted up in a whirling, roaring, mighty wind, as of a long gathering tempest, I was then lifted higher up and swept away, amid chaos and thundering And that night, afar, far off, I saw the dazzling world of Heaven, and I heard the celestial choirs, and I longed to enter, but no, I would wait until Jardac was saved, and I would lead him who led me to sin, into Heaven.

O I rejoiced, sang the praises of God. My mission, my prayers led him to go to the Christ,—O how powerful is fervent prayer. The joy of his conversion was a sunbeam to me, and I thanked God. I prayed for souls that were working towards Heaven—souls who yearned upwards like flowers to the sun, souls whose existence was love, whose mission peace.

CHAPTER X.

THE LIVING LOVE.

DOWN in the river stood a Man! . . . O Glory! it was the Great Son of God. How I effervesced in the transcendent joy of that exquisite moment! Again I saw the Infant of Love,—once again.

There was a mixed crowd of spectators on the shore; and in the waters of the Jordan stood two imperial men. The one crude and uncultured,—the Other a marvel of humane sweetness and tenderness. No ravishing bodily beauty was His, but—His Smile was Joy; His Word, Life.

John had been baptizing, and now that the Son of the God Eternal was come, John was reluctant to baptize Him. Slowly, almost imploringly, he said:

“I ought to be baptized by Thee, and Thou cometh to me, a creature who is only worthy to serve Thee.”

And then from those supernal lips of total truth and comforting words there accentuated in a sweetly low and distinct tone the humble words:

“Suffer it to be now. For it so becometh us to fulfill all justice.”

John, with a meek and reluctant move, filled a shell full of the river water. There rolled along in the cloudy horizon a red, fiery cloud, . . . it hovered

above Him, this Perfect Man, whose face betokened a spring's smiling morn redolent with a scented zephyr serene,—whose physique was marvellous in its pure, white beauty. The exposed flesh was luminous in its marble whiteness, surpassing all falling snow;—His bared feet were as studded with milky pearls. I gazed upon the One Perfect Man. O, I loved Him—loved and feverishly longed for Him beyond talking. I suffered poignant pangs of longing—the longing of a heart unfed. And lo! He gazed upwards, and slowly He spake the kindly words:

“Spirit of sorrow, let thy longing be satisfied.”

Then John poured the water upon His holy Head. And in that instant—while the words struck me—the idea entered myself that were I to descend into the water and trammel myself in this element, I could come in contact with the Living Love Divine. Down! I was in the water, . . . it seethed, . . . I felt confined, . . . yet, O what a surpassing sense of joy, of ecstatic peace pulsated through me. The water was around Him. His grace and peace permeating from His Perfect Self impregnated the water and reached me . . . O God, how grand it would be if could every soul in pain have such an experience! One in mortal life, knowing the joy, would leave life to experience it. Aye, truly as Scripture saith, “And as many touched Him were made whole.” *

Away off in the distant heavens there resounded a low, rattling din of mystic thunder, . . . it came rolling in pregnant boding towards the spot where He

* St. Mark, vi. 56.

was. Suddenly . . . the very heavens were rent forcibly asunder,—a light supernal emanated from therein,—the pellucid waters shimmered in translucent golden glory. And then . . . a Fire descended . . . soft martial music floating in the air . . . and the Spirit sat upon Him . . . and a Voice, supremely sweet, thrillingly sublime, said :

“This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased.”

Then Jesus stepped upon the shore and gazed at the people standing near-by, and His face of dazzling love intensely saddened into a Countenance of appalling tears. For He saw what those men were, who were assembled there; on each dim Spark there was a multitude of sins.

“John,” He said in appeal, “watch thyself and pray that thou becomest not as one of these,—but these have I come to save. My Mission has begun, O Father in Heaven, of what avail? How many will refuse to hear and accept Me!” And He walked away with that imperial ease and humble dignity natural to Him. Yet His head was bowed low and His very soul was tearfully sad.

The men who were being baptized gazed after Him in stupefied wonder, in inexpressible amazement.

Was this Sorrowful Man the Lamb of the Living God, Who was to *baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire*? Was it possible that this humble Personage was One whose shoe John was unworthy to loose?—were the perplexing questions that disturbed this people’s souls. And gazing at Him . . . lo! four prismatic,

shimmering, dazzling beams of light shot from Him into the mystic figure of the Cross. What this Prognostic meant I could not fathom,—but it greatly soothed and lulled the tempest of dreary sorrow in my soul. Here He was baptized, here the Spirit sat upon Him, in God's Temple of Air.

The waters of the river still held that circling grace; but upwards I flew, ærial in spirit sped. Darkness was again slowly falling upon me—darkness, though planetary circles of light grew as flowers in the field of space.

Away down in the distance I perceived one of the motley crowd, a witness of God's obeying of the Law, throw up his arms and cry:

“The Lamb of the Living God! Salvation and Hope!”

To my great and unexcelled joy I saw that it was Jārdac, and then....I could see no more....I ascended up, up, up towards God's Own World.

* * * * *

Rumble and roar....turmoil of skies....deep, sepulchral thunder resounding in a rattling din of menacing fury! Athwart the gathering clouds of somber pall-like darkness flitted like burning spirits of eternal torment, livid blue and crimson forks and tongues of flame. Away off a dark mountain towered in stubborn stillness before the living, cogent turmoil of the elements. It stared with a bold stare and an unflinching gaze at the few white clouds being driven along by the driving palls of darkness. It stared aghast at

this unfortuitous storm;—it saw the balls of crimson fire sputtering among the volubly rattling, thunder-laden clouds; it knew that the embryo of the Terrible was ready to burst in appalling grandeur and magnificence, that the storm chrysallis was as naught. It heard a sweet, resonant Voice proclaim, in a kindly tone:

“It is written, *not in bread alone doth man live, but in every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God*—words that are life to the Spirit.”

Then the rifts of jagged rocks on the elevated mountain filled with pensive tears,—and yet those enormous tears were enlivened by ecstatic joy. For the rending, growling caverns, the mountains all in all, recognized the Voice of their Omnipotent God. Away off in the tremulous heavens, despite storm and thunder clouds, reposed the faint crescent moon. Weird in her superannuated decline, she gave a ghastly aspect to the stupendous scene. A desert, barren and sterile, was below me, and at the foot of the yonder darkly looming mountain stood two personages: One, a Man of supernal sunshine, a ray of light in this mystic darkness. Around His smiling yet pensive Face, circled an aureole of silvery glory. The Sun in the darkened desert of Life sent forth His plenteous beams of inexhaustible, matchless Love, causing the darkness of materialism to fade away, spirituality sublime to reign. Prostrate on the quivering sand before Him was one whose lurid eyes betokened inward fires. A little cessation, a short lull in his seemingly neverending period of evilness and torture was this. And what a mild, most

thankful expression of unburdened relief and soothed pain flitted over his dark and kingly face! He raised his arm. . . . a flash of viridescent illumination filled all of the visible heavens, showing distinctly and accurately the perturbation of the subterranean caverns and the stupendous magnificence of mountain tears. The clouds had burst upon the mountain, and the water rushing out, if not real tears, were similar to them.

"True," cried Satan wistfully, "true, and I live! I live by the Word . . . *but how?*"

Ascending through the thunder-vibrating air, they stood upon the groaning mountain. Satan extended his long and beautiful arms, and *shewed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.*

"See,—see the glories thereof," cried Satan in tremulous tones, "these will I give Thee,—for Thou canst not get them. Thou art pure—and Purity and Truth never can win temporal power; it is Lie that men obey. I can get Thee these; I walk over the earth, ruling evil men and devils, and these can I get Thee,—and then Thou wilt be recognized—a real King. And men will then love Thee. They now listen to me rather than Thee—oh, I hate them for it! Oh. . . my misery! ! . . . my anguished loneliness and grief!" And the very rocks roared in sympathy as he wailed. "Man is more evil than I, O Christ,—hence adore me,—lift me to heaven. *To Thee—will I give all this power—mere rubbish of the earth, but which will make men accept Thee—and the glory of them; for to me they are delivered,—and to whom I will, I give them. If therefore Thou wilt adore me all this is Thine, as man.*"

Satan stood before this God of Love, and anxiously awaited the reply of this King incognito.

“Satan, once bright angel of Heaven,” said Jesus, reproachfully, “dost thou not know that evil grows, as good grows, and had not thy hate sown the seed, the sorrow now would not be thine! Through Love alone can I reach the hearts of men, not by temporal power. I cannot raise Thee to Heaven, thou knowest well. It is written, *Thou shalt adore the Lord thy God, and Him only, shalt thou serve.* To adore thee—to love gold, vice, pleasure, and temporal sway—is a sin. And we dare not sin. Art thou not ashamed so to hate the weak angel that I love, for whose good I shall die?”

Satan slunk away in shame, and murmured, “Aye, aye,”—and from the very subterranean caverns and bowels of the earth, from the primitive forests of weird shade, from the lowest depth of cold ocean, from the cloud-riven and thundering heavens, came the universal murmur of accent and accord, “Aye, aye.” He went on in beseeching tones, a lugubrious expression on his face:

“Aye, Him only shall we serve; but in ages to come men will His creatures honor, serve and offer orisons to. He will be slighted—the saints invoked. Instead of pouring ointment on Thy feet, by serving God and following Thee, men will give to Thy untrue ‘representative’ *Peter’s pence*. Instead of going to the Father by the One Way, they will have to go by the ‘Chair of Peter’—and he who will be the Head of the Church that will follow Thee, instead of Thy representative,

will be my Representative, instead of speaking *ex cathedra* by the Holy Ghost, he will speak *ex cathedra* by my prompting—for he will be my prolocutor, my votary, by virtue of his lust—his lust of temporal power, his love of gold. And as Thou wilt suffer Judgment before the Sanhedrim, so will Genius and Truth suffer before him. As Thou wilt be condemned by Lie, so will Truth be condemned by false Dogma!”

(Hence, O mortals of Earth, I cry with Christ . . .

WATCH). “Men will not follow Thee and worship God, O Christ,” went on Satan, “but will follow Lust in Sensualism by the non-existence of true religion; and their god will be—Gold. I adore God—men adore me! Yet for this I suffer, O pitiful, holy Christ! O Jesus, Thou art a, God—I love Thee. And how canst Thou so love that earthly worm—Man—as to die, to try to save him—for heaven? O God, why is he to be made immortal—an angel?—why will he rise and I fall—fall? for I hate him. Vile, vicious, uncouth creature of slime, he loves Thee not—he hates Thee—he worships not God . . . but Me—*me*. O Christ, sweet name of Love, in future ages Thy name man will make a mockery of, Thy death, he will say, is the end of a charlatan, Thy claims a Lie—he will disregard Thy Love—he will serve me, making grief for me, damning himself. Holy God, let me annihilate him without grief to myself—let me roll his little globe back to the fire of its birth, and let him be no more. For he *hath* no *love* for Thee,—for did not a soul Thou didst forgive at Thy birth—a vile, love-lorn woman—seek Thy death for sin? Forgive me, and let me—who

was the grand angel of light and power in heaven—rise to stay. Kill the Memory in me, even if Thou dost destroy an immortal essence! Yet let me slay unthankful, sinful Man—whom I hate, which hate makes me make him sin, which sin makes my misery. Thou knowest, God-in-Man, that the faith which Thou wilt make known will be altered to suit the taste of men, that a Pope will be put up instead of Thee, that Money, and not Virtue, will be the Gate to Heaven—man's heaven....*vice*. Better by a thousand times will it be to let me have my revenge....annihilate the beast....how canst Thou love him!"

His dark arms outstretched, his bosom heaving hate, his eyes full of fear, love, and malice, he listened to the reply.

"Satan, Satan," said Jesus, sweetly, "Thou art indeed in the dark if thou knowest not My love.... to create Man was Love, to save him Love, to give him heaven Love. If he sin, I can love and pity him, and he may atone. What I have created in love cannot be destroyed in hate. Satan, Satan, thou dost enjoy tempting man, and it naturally retrogrades thee—thou art unjust. If Man loves temporal power, sins, and forgets Me, I do not forget him. I AM for him, to be loved. O! I love him. Thou dost hate him. Hence thy grief. To be forgiven all hate must leave thee, thou must repent, thou must atone to Man. Although he may forget the existing spiritual agencies of love, they shall not forget him; although he lose his soul, I live for him. I die for him, and shall do all that a God could do. O, if he would only listen to

Me, hear My voice, accept My love! Thou darest not annihilate by sorrow what I love."

With a piteous sigh of anger and envy, Satan said:
"O Lord, so may it be!"

He brought Him to Jerusalem, and set Him on a pinnacle of the temple,—and he said to Him:

"If Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself from hence. For it is written, that *He hath given His angels charge over Thee, that they may keep Thee; and that in their hands they shall bear Thee up, lest perhaps Thou dash Thy foot against a stone.* Prove Thy power—the Power which so loves men."

And Jesus, with a glance of reluctant sadness and pity, said:

"*Begone, Satan, thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.* Go, greatest spirit of torture in Hell; thou hast tempted Me. Go from hence that others may win a high place in Heaven, for in resisting thee they do hardly work. Begone." And this was delivered in a no hateful and loathing tone, as though He hated and despised Satan; no, 'twas given in that sweet, merciful, silvery tone, which is correlative to Perfect Love. A fierce, harsh, or gruff command of hate and despication would have been a total negation of true love. *And all the temptations being ended, the devil departed from Him for a time.*

Then the thunders died away. The morning's sun rose to view in all his brilliant splendor of matchless worldly light. I felt happy, joyous. Oh, my sorrow was fading, my joys increasing.

Jardac was being saved!

I was seeing Him!

O, joy tinged and quivered through me. I felt that I was being perfected;—I felt a potent and electric Love nourishing me and causing me to develop into great angelic Beauty. Of course, I was indeed sad; but that sadness withal was glad. Soon, I joyfully thought, I should meet Jardac; soon we would be before this lenient Master, who was the incarnation of perfect Truth and Love, whose mission just begun would be pregnant with great results. O, I was happy! I was rising . . . rising . . . rising up towards Heaven.

The nocturne of pregnant signification was ended. The loving Face of kindly beauty was gone from me. And then, alleviated sorrow environing me, I spent three years. Little pain did I now suffer:—*the remembrance of sin* was fading; the love and joy of Heaven were before me—me who was a Radiant Soul now.

What a lesson may be taken from the temptation! Especially notice the one wherein Satan wants Christ to exhibit His powers, to cast Himself from the Temple, so that angels would bear Him up. How few mortals take the lesson. They jump at every opportunity whereby they may show their talent and superiority for the praise of men; no humility is theirs; earthly honors alone they crave. To prove themselves great they seek the stage of the world, pushing others back to gain for themselves prominence. But not so with the Son of God. The Son of God was tempted by the senses, by the love of riches, by the praise of men; but

these held no attraction that submerged the power of will.

As I said, I passed three earthly years. I was becoming a radiant Spirit, beautiful and brilliant with electric fire. And I loved Jardac—loved him more. I awaited him, loving him;—I hovered near Jesus; I helped mortals.

I was descending as a flame of lightning through the air, and I felt joyous, and then....I felt a lulling sweetness perforate me, and below me was the King of Humanity, the Son of God, the LIVING LOVE.

Standing on bare sand, the beautiful orb of light, the sun, His only visible halo, He surveyed with pitying love an irate creature before Him.

“Thou art a base impostor!” cried this wanton virago of seething feminine passion. She was a dark, shrunken woman, of distinctly Hebrew type. Her eyes blazed vindictively with devilish wrath, and her bosom heaved convulsively. No answer did those Holy Lips vouchsafe.

“Thou art a base, meretricious impostor!” she strenuously repeated, trying to elicit an answer from Him. Then in those sweet, chiming tones, as of bells distantly ringing, His voice accentuated words in the close, awe-struck, silent air.

“Thinkest thou,” He said, raising His hand of comforting benediction, “that the God is an impostor?”

“Nay,” cried the woman, “the God of our Fathers we love; we obey the Mischna; we offer to Him sacrifices—Thou art false because He is true.” And with

a decided gesture of conviction, she stood glowering at Him, with that low, impudent look habitual to a class of the female sex.

“Aye, aye,” said this Sweet Humility, “thou offerest to the God of thy fathers sacrifices, but knowest thou ——” and His voice of angel sweetness grew fervid, and there came a look of pity and wrong into those Celestial Eyes—“knowest thou that thy sacrifices are naught to the Father in Heaven—and Me. The prayer of a simple, pure heart is a million times of more avail than the one-millionth part of an ostentatious sacrifice of golden grandeur. Blood of calves God loves not—also incense and candles are perishable in essence . . . but an invocation to the Father in Heaven, from a heart free from guile and self-interest, shall last forever . . . *shall last forever,—to all time.*”

“He denieth the efficacy of our sacrifices, as though the work of Satan He previously hath done is naught!” shrilly screamed the woman, waving her arms of brown assertiveness in the air. And she said solemnly, menacingly: “If my friends were here, if the priests were here, they would stone Thee.”

“And they will,” sadly asserted this Man of Sorrows in a plaintive tone that seemed like the shrill, dolorous, yet musical cry of a dying bird in a desert of hopeless despair. “Aye, God knoweth it, they, the priests, will stone Me—stone Me as hard as they can; by calumny, by sin! O Father, why does man hate Me? Why shall I be misrepresented and stoned in ages and ages to come?” He paused, and tears—the tears of God—flowed from His sorrowful eyes. “The priests of the

Jewish church—the present church—will stone Me. The priests of the coming church—the future Churches—will stone Me! They can,—and they will! O Father! Father!” And with that piteous wail of sadness, He fell prone to the earth in an attitude of humility, and His aspect was one of dejection and grief. The woman who had listened to these words in a state of stupefaction, now seeing Him thus humbly procumbent on the earth, took advantage to satisfy her malicious hate, and . . . she raised a stone . . . and cast it at the prostrate Redeemer of the World. It struck His tender, godly flesh . . . and cut it; the sacred blood began to flow. He arose. The woman retreated, cowering in shame before that Glance of Woe-Begone Pity and Forgiveness.

“An example of the Future World!” He wailed, looking beseechingly up to Heaven.

“Why speakest Thou not to me?” interrogated the woman, somewhat timorously. “Thou didst well merit the hit! Thou wast preaching and my son heard Thee. Thou didst say to him, ‘If thou wilt be perfect go and sell what thou hast, and give it to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in Heaven,—and come and follow Me.’ The deluded fool hath done so; he left me, his mother, and hath gone to Thee. He acteth as a very child——”

“And,” interposed Christ, slowly and solemnly, “I have already said that *unless you be converted and become as little children, you shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*. Thy priests and people are far from me, far from My Father in Heaven, for well has

Esaias spoken, *This people honoreth Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. Thou and thy priests are far from Me,—*” and impressively and vehemently He spake—“and farther yet shall some of the coming priests be who hurriedly and impatiently intone the rituals. Amen, amen, I say to thee, that when men cease to be as children, when Wealth is God, when Truth is confuted, when the Poor are detruded, when husbands in miserly ambition starve their wives, and are also deficient in respect, when Evil triumphs and has outrooten Religion. . . . then the end will be at hand! And though the World stoneth Me, yet this poor terrene sphere hurteth Me not so much as it hurteth itself,—for the fire enkindled from Lie, Infidelity, Irreligion, Hypocrisy, and Sin, is a hot fire—of eternal burn. O Love, soon to be betrayed! . . . Man, accept My Love!” And crystalline tear-drops of sparkling glory fell from His sorrowful eyes of tenderness. Thus He walked away, with only hearty pity and love for sinners;—hate had no place in this Embodiment of Perfect Love. And who will dare to say that He was not a Child always, a Child of Obedience, Comfort, and Mercy,—and most of all, a Child of Love?

A Child, an Infant—for even in the manger tear-drops of pure love were shed—an Infant of Love was He. Yet no endearing sobriquet, no matter how sweet, deep, and grandiloquent, can convey the meaning, the depth of the unparalleled Love of this Holy Man of Simple Faith and unreserved Child-like Love.

I knew this Man was simply God; I love Him accordingly. I felt that He would do great deeds, bring

many to Heaven, and love,—but I guessed not how He would ultimately leave man. All I knew was that He was a God in all, that He would save, that He loved,—and was to be loved.

CHAPTER XI.

THE SAVIOUR'S PRESCIENCE OF THE EVILS OF TO-DAY.

AGAIN, O Loving God, another joy—another vision of my Saviour came to me. Down, down, the impetus of Love drew me down.

Down on the earth He was mounting a colt. With imperial ease and sublime humility of mien, He mounted the simple animal.

In momentary speed, as the thought formed itself from embryo, I descended—by the will and permission of the Supreme Power—and entered the animal. Only to be near this Holy One, to feel His potently soothing and loving influence! A soothing calm, a sweet, indefinable peace and surging love perforated me, and caused me to exult with inward joy and exquisite pleasure. I longed to proclaim Him King vociferously.

What a sweet and loving smile irradiated that sacred Face, as words of life flowed from His unsullied lips!

Onward we went. A vast multitude, with jubilant acclamations, cast palm leaves and rich raiment before Him, and many and many cried:

“Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest: The King of Israel!”

Then and there He was recognized as a Superior Being. His disciples, being assured and cognizant of His mighty power and Divine Personality, cried:

"Blessed be our King, the Messiah, the Lord! Blessed be the God-Man; for His mission is Love. O all ye people, know you that *He hath come to save sinners*, that He hath said that *there is more joy in Heaven upon one sinner doing penance, than upon ninety-nine just who need not penance.*

"Love is in Him:—*Love is the fulfilling of the Law.* Fulfill the Law, all ye people,—fulfill His simple Law, and ye shall be saved to Life Everlasting. Glory be to the Christ who forgiveth sinners and feedeth the hungry,—who loveth Man and suffereth for him,—who saveth Man, and who is by Man rejected. Blessed be our Saviour! Glory! Glory! Glory to Christ the Healer, the Comforter of the dying. *Blessed be the King who cometh in the name of the Lord; peace in Heaven, and glory on High!*"

Several sleek Pharisees in an acrimonious tone, with sycophant smiles, said:

"*Master, we know Thou art a king, but stop this ranting; rebuke Thy disciples.*"

He, the Saviour, turned, and with a withering smile of pardon and pity, said:

"Know the God whom you know not: *I say unto you, that if these shall hold their peace, the stones will cry out.*"

And they were restless and resentively silent from outcry, though they angrily whispered among them-

selves. He was a madman, thought they. He had said "*the stones will cry out.*"

Were there lives in those stones?—were other souls in material so as to receive the salutary and enormous flood of emanating love? Does a Divine life impregnate every atom of creation? Aye, the earth was ready to burst with restrained joy.

We entered Jerusalem amid "Hosannas" and triumphant singing. The "Prophet" was royally received by those who soon were to cry for His death, and curse themselves, saying, "His blood be upon us and upon our children." And this self-invoked curse itself forms a terribly blighting penalty of an awful crime.

As we were entering the City He gazed sadly at it and silently wept for a short time, then in sadly sweet accents, He mournfully said:

"If thou hadst known in this thy day, the things that are to thy peace, but are now hidden from thine eyes.

"For the day shall come upon thee,—and thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and straighten thee on every side.

"And beat thee flat to the ground, and thy children who are in thee,—and they shall not leave in thee a stone upon a stone; because thou hast not known the time of thy visitation.

"And even so as thou refuseth Me, as thy priests will seek to kill Me, so also in futurity, I see that the world will fall from Me, the professed-religious men will be hypocrites; the vicious will be declared pure; I shall be denied. The priests will refuse clothing to the

poor, will close the doors of the houses of prayer upon those of their displeasure, will not visit the poor; and thus will Me deny. Amen, amen, when they do this to the poor they do it to Me.

“As Jerusalem in such a day seeth her doom, so in this coming day will the world be destroyed. Then the *abomination of desolating* will stand in the holy place! For to worship God they build fanes of gold, and hence comes corruption.

“Jerusalem, thou art a type of the time to come.”

And so saying, He gazed heavenward in mute grief. At that moment I was carried away in chaotic darkness. But soon again I was on earth, and saw this Man of Sorrows as He was entering the Temple. He entered the House of Prayer with a slow, imperial ease, and sorrow shone from His loving eyes of tender blue. Four shimmering beams of argent brilliancy dazzlingly shone from Him in the form of the Cross.

“What meaneth this sign of a malefactor’s ignominious death? It is absolutely impossible that this Man, the God of Love, could die such a death! He is surely exempt from such a fate! . . . What can this Prognostic foretell?”—so I argued.

I loved Him, this Sweet Love, with the greatest Love. He was Joy to me; Him I loved as a God. My love for Jardac was a minor love,—yet the greatest of minor loves. Since being in contact with Jesus, since seeing Him, I had the singular sensations of growth and satisfied longing. I was in greater joy, and my grief was alleviated; I exulted to sun myself in His blessed Presence.

He entered the magnificent Temple. A reproving look of displeasure asserted itself upon His countenance. Near Him was a man selling oxen.

"Begone," cried Christ, and He with marvellous speed liberated the oxen from their stalls and chased them out of the Temple. He then went to a seller that sold doves.

"Rabbi," said the seller, "take not my doves. They are being sold for circumcision."

"Begone," cried Jesus, "so much the more outrage. Sell ye these out in the streets. Sell ye not in My house—not even if it be the indited Law itself. For what is consecrated should not be defiled."

He made by His power the man leave, and then overthrew his chair.

Likewise, He acted thus to many. He went to sellers and changers who had vast amounts of coin.

"Rabbi, we give the God offerings in person of the priests; we fill the treasury," was cackled out by several cracked, creaky-voiced men of avariciousness.

"The money given to priests is not God's;—they savor of worldly things;—Mammon is far removed from Godliness. Defile not God's temple by this blasphemous proceeding. Go!" And with a lash of cords He drove many away and upset their tables. His eyes flashed dangerously, and in a tone of commanding menace, of outraged love and sorrowful pity, He said, impressively and distinctly:

"My house is called a house of prayer, but you have made it a den of thieves. Take all these things from hence, and make not the house of My Father a house

of traffic Yet this will be done in ages to come—when the end will be near. A type of the churches to come. . . . when men will be called to pray in public all to get cash for the priests. . . . and the houses dedicated to God will be full of pagan symbols, will be chambers of incarnate devils.

“ Begone, ye ribald cheats and satellites of usury, blasphemy, and evil! Ye sellers, you outrage the God of Love by the stench of Mammon. Your pernicious dealings merit fire eternal,—yet God is Love. Begone, and never reinstate yourselves here. . . . for only a short time will this place last—’twill then be swept away. . . . and naught will remain but ashes. Hypocritical priests and vain, empty offerings of pompous display cause the punishment. Begone! If men must have an edifice wherein to pray, let it be God’s,—not Mammon’s. But, amen, I say, *God’s temple is the earth, the vault the skies, the altar heaven, whereon is not sacrifice—but mercy*; His temple is nature, where He is seen, where guilty priests do not defile the altar by proximity to treasures. Let simple Faith be man’s—and My Father will be glad.”

At that moment a wizzened, yellow-faced money-changer tottered to Christ, and vindictively gnawing the end of a cane, complained in a piping voice:

“ Thou—Thou. . . . hast caused. . . . my—most. . . . precious. . . . gold to be reduced. . . . Some is lost. I—I—I want my gold!”

“ Amen, Elizur, I say to thee,” responded Christ, His hand uplifted, “ that it were better for thee, and all similar to thy set, that thou wouldst perish utterly in

molten gold and fire than to continue to sell as thou hast been—avariciously selling in God's temple, cheating and plotting. Go, and take heed lest in time to come gold will not burn thy hands."

Awed, yet dissatisfied, he complainingly growled and tottered away, his cane introverted.

Growls and complaints were heard, and dismay and consternation were plainly exhibited by a certain set of creatures.

But the majority of those assembled there went to Him and attentively hearkened to Him and drank in His life-giving Words of Love.

Apart in a secluded spot were several high priests in confabulation. Anger and jealousy were the reigning passions in each crafty, mean priest's bosom.

"He taketh the people from our power," excitedly exclaimed one.

"Aye, aye," asserted another crafty trickster, smacking his pale thin lips, "He letteth the adulteress go free!"

"Shame," said another, "And He sayeth He is the Son of God. Many believe this obviously false fanatic."

"Yes," vindictively asseverated another callous rascal, his eyes flashing and his hands clenched in malevolent anger, "He chooseth these men from this place. And if they be fools enough to hearken unto Him, a goodly pile will be taken from us——"

"And," interrupted the first speaker, "many fine and grand things, by His calumnious teaching and precepts of Simplicity and Poverty will be denied us in the

worship of the beneficent God of Abraham and Moses."

"As long as He existeth," cunningly said speaker number two, "people will fall from us. He calleth us the abominable names of *hypocrite* and *whited sepulcher*. He condemneth our raiment. He loves simplicity. And he promiseth to aggrandize and give life eternal to all—even Gentiles and sinners! Why 'tis awful! And 'tis said He possesseth a prolific and potent power, a clear, unassuming and convincing style of narration, and poetic speech and a kindly loving face. Aye, if any one individual or mortal of earth be a hypocrite, this humble Nazarene is. He hath a wonderful and marvellous power in rodomontade;—His mendacity is entirely undetectable;—His condemning tongue is eagerly hearkened to, and though subject to many insults and much misprizal, He, by a great minority, is exceedingly loved. He and His modicum of disciples threaten to submerge us. Many look with pitiful eye at us . . . and refuse us offering and coin! ! ! The bags from the treasury number less than they used to."

They remained silent for a short length of time, each engrossed in basely speculative, egotistically sophisticated thoughts.

"If we could get Him," at length cautiously suggested one of the unscrupulous wretches, "by some intrigue, or catch Him in blasphemy . . . *we might put Him away.*"

"Amen," said another more boldly, "the very children love Him and sing to Him. And He hath the

boldness to tell the people *to be like children!* What a precocious child he must be, so ingenious in plot! yet. . . . His plots shall fall: We will,—*we must*,—succeed. We dare not be impeded!"

"And He must die," eagerly cried one, giggling cynical laughter. "He preacheth of life after death. He soon must taste that 'life' if we can work well."

"Not so loud, Annas," said another in a cautious, reproving tone, "He must be put away or our power will cease."

"Aye, aye, aye!" murmured all in unanimous accord. And whispering, with many gesticulations, and triumphant smiles on their evil faces, they moved away into the inner recesses of the gorgeously adorned temple.

I was then whirled away, and instinctively rose. . . . And rising—I saw the empyrean World; and O, I heard the music of His tones!

What a veracious and vivid representation of priestcraft! And as it was then, so it is now—The Past and the Present are as one. And how Christ does hate this sin!

And now—in To-day—readers, ask yourselves what Christ would do were He on earth in human form! What would He say to the selling of "holy candles, statues, and religious articles" in a church? What would He say of the *paid* prayers? His command was to love and to bear one another's burdens. He did not authorize or even permit the act of saying prayers for "contributors,"—the prayers being an advertisement. Let me insert a *jarring* article from some papers exhorting "the very small sum of twenty-five cents"—

for which to educate young men for the priesthood from persons wishing help (the help to come from these paid prayers). Whereas, those who wish to live as Christ wished them, should contribute extemporaneously and secretly, without wishing to be rewarded by paid prayers. This mode of getting money is a clever one—but in direct contradiction of the Law of Christ. If money was needed, subterfuge and infamous hypocrisy were not necessary; if the laity truly loved God it would have given without the promise of intentions remembered in masses. I select this paper from a million money-making schemes of priests, and it shows what sort of Judas exists To-day. Christ said:

“Take heed that ye do not put your alms before men, to be seen of them; otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in Heaven.

“For when thou doest alms, let not thy right hand know what thy left hand doeth; and thy Father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.”

“Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you,” again saith the Embodiment of Truth.

“Ask, and ye shall receive,” He says; not, “Ask another, or pay another, to ask for you.” If one does charity one shall be rewarded,—for saith Christ. “Not a drink of water given in the name of a disciple shall go unrewarded.” So one must not give charity for the reward, to have priests pray for one. The charity engenders reward;—consequently, one needs no prayers in reward for charity to gain reward. No beating around the bush,—but, “*Ask, and ye shall receive.*”

Apropos one must not placard one's charities by having one's names "among the contributors!" Thus we see that the priests ask us to do what Christ distinctly forbade. This is a common example, which is at present happening.

And the contributors' names being among the "contributors," their work is seen; whereas, if they were to give secretly, not asking the offered reward of paid prayers, the Father in Heaven would reward them by the richer reward. This is the inducement circulated in the United States by a certain Roman Catholic college.

"Contributors to the Burse will, no doubt, be gratified to learn that the names of all Contributors to the Burse are placed in a receptacle before the statue of Our Lady of Perpetual Help. Mass is celebrated daily at an altar, which stands immediately beside the statue and Shrine of Our Lady. Each day the intentions of our Contributors are remembered in the Mass."—Christ would, free of charge, remember one's "intentions" without the necessity of one's being a "Contributor."

This is copied *verbatim et literatum* from the leaflet. The leaflet tells how one may have the reward of having one's "intentions" remembered in a mass by the Altar of the Virgin. The Contributors, only, are remembered,—and to become a Contributor—notice the paramount necessity!—one must "cough up" the TWENTY-FIVE CENTS. And this is the way the churches are made a "den of thieves" to-day,—and it is worse than the old way.

A Catholic priest on the Altar during Mass recently made this statement:

“I will not say a requiem mass for less than ten dollars.”

And not long ago some clergymen of a large and so-called Christian nation, got together to try to make a fixed charge for attending burials. What a sad World! a miserable World.*

This needs no comment, save that it is suggestive that Heaven is bought by base gold—as though a “requiem mass”—said for a fee—could open Heaven! Oh, vile, base, low, mean schemes! And the saying of “Masses for the Dead,” so popular in the Roman Church, is an excellent scheme on part of the priests, to “hoof in” money. They accept the money—the pay—at an “offering,” but if a mortal has not the “offering,” the “Mass for the Dead” will not likely be said.

What would the loving Christ say of the minister whose aim is supposed to be godly, but whose perpetual, discordant cry, dinned into one's ears Sunday after Sunday continually without cessation, is the jarring, grating, sickening exhortation for “Money, money!” Now,—in To-day,—the invariable and *pre-eminent* aim of priests and preachers is the desire to amass materialistic and ungodly coin, and to rival one another in church and temporal advancement, and in acquiring mundane glory. Mammon reigns in the places built and intended for the worship and adoration of God. Die, and leave a legacy to a church: you shall surely be called a saint. What would Christ's

* Facts.

verdict on this state of affairs be ? As this is plainly and evidently the case, what edification is there in going to church ?

As I saw how the Man of Sorrows foresaw the evils of To-day, as I have come to write of myself and Him, as an example and warning, who lived when He did, sinned and died, I may dwell upon the Evil in the Churches founded by Him who forgave me.

Let one of America's foremost poets here utter his cry—the cry of a child for its mother—for Truth and Pure Worship.

“The groves were God's first temples. Ere man learned
To hew the shaft, and lay the architrave,
And spread the roof above them,—ere he framed
The lofty vault, to gather and roll back
The sound of anthems ; in the darkling wood,
Amidst the cool and silence, he knelt down
And offered to the Mightiest, solemn thanks
And supplication. For his simple heart
Might not resist the sacred influences,
Which, from the stilly twilight of the place,
And from the gray old trunks that high in heaven
Mingled their mossy boughs, and from the sound
Of the invisible breath that swayed at once
All their green tops, stole over him, and bowed
His spirit with the thought of boundless power
And inaccessible majesty. Ah, why
Should we, in the world's riper years, neglect
God's ancient sanctuaries, and adore
Only among the crowd, and under roofs
That our frail hands have raised ? Let me, at least,
Here in the shadow of this aged wood,
Offer one hymn—thrice happy if it find
Acceptance in His ear.” *

* From “Forest Hymn,” by William Cullen Bryant.

And the forest, God's primeval and pastoral temple, is undeniably the most gorgeous, the most sanctifying, the most edifying, and the most purely sublime church of all existent Churches; for in the Churches Mammon thrives in a contented and an undisputed sway.

There is no touch of filthy lucre in the grand piles—the trees; there is no assumed and ostentatious air in the ubiquitous birds' songs—songs sung extemporaneously from their simple, guileless hearts, free from vulgar pride and empty agony; there is a true, straight, plain prayer of deep, fervent thankfulness in the wild animal's tongue; there is an equally sublime and solemn hymn in the forest song; there is an intangible sacredness and an edifying example in the simplest beautifier of the soil—a flower, For

“ The simplest flower that grows, can give
Thoughts that lie oft too deep for tears.”

And it was of this primitive, unsophisticated church, where birds continually sing dulcet, mellifluous anthems with facility and true-heartedness,—where the mated beasts with celerity and assiduous zeal, lovingly tend their young—(shame to men!),—where the forest is filled with spirits real,—where the flowers are emblems of God's dear Love,—where the brook gurgles a sweet, uncomplaining prayer,—where the visible stars at night foretell a never-ending system of glories supernal,—where man can peacefully rest,—where spirits may roam,—of this church it was

that Bryant said : " Let me, at least, here in the shadow of the aged wood, offer one hymn."

How much better and purer would not Humanity be if it would go into a rural secluded wood and meditate on the verdant beauties of Nature, the sublime cadences of the winged songsters of carols, and the goodness of God and His unsurpassed Love, instead of conventionally " going to church ? " The beauty of Nature would elevate Man to higher thoughts and aspirations than any dogmatical form of religion could. For there is more edification in Nature's church than in the " temples built with hands "—temples of which St. Stephen said :

" But Solomon built Him a house.

" Yet the Most High dwelleth not in houses made by hand, as the prophet saith :

" Heaven is My throne ; and the earth My footstool. What house will you build Me ? saith the Lord : or what is the place of My resting ?

*" Hath not My hand made all these things ? " **

Yet people think it their duty to go to these temples ;—yet what good do they get out of the insipid discourses, the fallacious, egotistical reasonings, the mediocral, vapid, verbose prayers, the dreadful personal prerogatives of the ministers—prerogatives usually used in invariably authorizing and getting charity for the church (and in many cases the clergyman is the " church ")—and the gabbering blarneyism and the platitudes of the clergymen ? . . . Here in the forest, where pharisaism defiles not God's work, Man would

* Acts vii. : 47, 48, 49, 50.

truly pray—he could not possibly do otherwise. And in Nature he would rejoice and glorify God, for Nature would be a sure, joyous precursor of better things, of grander beauties to come. Here he would be more than a mere automaton of dogmatical and methodical prayers. Here men would be equal,—the lewd but wealthy man-animals could not hide their tails in front pews; the poor would not have to sit back:—all would be equal, as all things should be equal; for Equality is the Law of the Brotherhood of Man.

It was under the blue sky, in a river, amid Nature, that Christ began His mission of surpassing fecundity, of great, extraordinary love, by being baptized; it was in the secluded desert that He was tempted as man; it was on a mountain, under the cerulean vault, that He was transfigured in empyrean glory; it was in the field, midst simple flowers, that He spake the words: “Consider the lilies of the field how they grow, they toil not, neither do they spin.

“But I say unto you, that not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed as one of these.”

Even Solomon in all His glory—surrounded by unlimited wealth, by a grand, gorgeous Temple of jewels and gold, by fair women and petitioning priests—*was not arrayed as one of these**! What a stupendous truth! What a crushing and devastating phrase to the grand cathedral! For if Christ spake thus of the ancient Temple, in His impartial equity He means also the Present,—for to God the Past, the

* St. Matthew vi. 28, 29.

Present, and the Future are as one. Hence the great golden incusted St. Peter's at Rome is *not arrayed as one of these*. The great paintings and the works of gold and art are not even as a small lily of the field! Hence would it not be better to worship the Maker of all beauty amid things which are arrayed better, and are hence superior, than the gloriously decked church? Would this not be better than to worship Him in an inferior place?

It was under the blue sky, upon the bare earth's sod, that this Embodied Truth healed and forgave; it was in a garden that He shed loving, bitter tears; it was upon Calvary's bare mountain that He was suspended in air, a Spectacle and Proof of the Greatest Love. It was not in a fane built by Man's hand that He manifested and proved the greatest Love existent by laying down His Life for His friends.

Let the true priest, *without purse, nor script*, go into the forest, and, amid the glories of Nature, the birds sweetly and reverently singing, cure the sick, comfort and teach men, and pray to God with simple prayers, heartfelt and deep. Then, when this is done, the world from the Path of dread and fearful Retrogression, will have begun to return into the Path of pure Love and Virtue.

This would exceedingly and exceptionally please God. He wants no grand, money-adorned churches built from the hard-earned cash of those who can barely afford to compete for a mortal existence. No fee of "ten cents" to go to High Mass, no "dollar" for pew rent, no "ten dollars" for a requiem mass,

doth God desire. Such proceedings are awful and sacrilegious deviations from His simple Law. A calm and incontrovertible negation to this cruel, hard, down-right robbery on part of His "ministers" are the words of Christ Himself, spoken to those whom He sends to preach and promulgate His Laws:

"Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes, and salute no man by the way.

"Into whatsoever house you enter, first say: Peace be in this house." *

Do the clergymen of To-day act in accordance with this? No! sadly it must be confessed that they do not. They unscrupulously reverse the Law: They carry well-filled purses, wear the best and most expensive made shoes, salute the rich and ignore the poor, and instead of saying "Peace be in this house," they say, "I have come for a donation." To uphold their illicit, dreadful, abominable practices, they pun on the phrase:

"Those who preach the Gospel, should live by the Gospel."

Were they to study this ever so lightly, they could, *if they would*, see the untarnished, plain, and straightforward truth,—"*Those who preach the Gospel should live by the Gospel,*" and not get fat on the money of the Gospel, *but simply live*. There is not the least suggestion of a hint in this phrase to give rise, or legalize, the act of rearing superfluously decked churches from the money of paid prayers—and lost

* St. Luke, x. 4, 5.

souls. For many souls realizing the extreme and total ungodliness of this work, fall from God, and then ultimately shift to Hell. They have no coin wherewith to pay for a pew; and to go to High Mass, then their innate pride rebels against being looked upon as dependent paupers. Hence they go not to Church, they go nowhere—and for a time lose God and suffer. To them, I say: Go to the woods of vernal beauties, meditate, thank God, and pray.

In To-day, it is plainly evident that the houses built for God are mere houses of traffic,—yet these are declared to be the true houses of Christ. The gold-incrusted church, worked from and fed by Poverty's grimy hand, is said to be pleasing to God! Hallowed by God's pleasure is the glaring, flaring fane of gilded, sickening garniture, say the clergymen. It would not be a wonder if their lips would parch and shrivel with heat in the utterance of the gross blasphemy. A house of Thanksgiving and Praise, untainted by money, decorated by Nature and works of God's inspiration only, would be pleasure to God,—and to men. But the Churches of To-day are not thus: they are more like a stock-exchange—the more cash invested, the more favors of the clergymen. And the clergymen show a greater aptitude to money matters than to charity, mercy, goodness, and virtue. Instead of giving half to the poor, half of the poor's earnings are extorted from them! Verily, verily true is the world retroceding. Christ's Laws are detruded, priests' laws upheld. What will the good Christ say when He comes?—where will be the fruits of His

Laws?—but in the church! And will the fruits of the church be pleasing to Him?

THINK. Meditate upon it.

* * * * *

I was on earth again and saw my Lord. But how did I see Him? In what an anguished state! Kneeling almost prostrate on the earth, His hands clasped hard in convulsive torture, His sweet face of meek resignation emaciated, wan, and pale from superhuman sorrow, His eyes overflowing wells of burning tears, His surcharged bosom heaving convulsively in gasping, stitching pangs of pain,—there He was, well-nigh procumbent to the sod, alone in His grief, a forlorn Sorrow. Near-by lay three men asleep.

“Father, father,” I heard Him brokenly, deplorably mutter, between gasps of choking sobs, “at last, when the consummation is near, I submit to knowledge....and I see. I see that My Love will be scorned, laughed at, and will be to many of no avail. I see that in coming ages those who elect to follow me, to feed the flocks, will shear the wool and drive the flocks into the cold. The flocks will suffer and blame Me! O tender flocks, ye will be led astrayI see that those who will obey the priests will come to Me only through form, without motive, methodically, from compulsion and custom. Few, oh, so very few, will come to Me from pure Love. I see that Love will hardly exist, Love begets, engenders, thrives on, and nourishes Love; stern, harsh rules repulse Love and breed form without heart. Chil-

dren even will sin in heinous crimes, be full of vice and cynicism,—their bestialities will be beyond mortals' counting,—they will care naught for Me, and less for Thee, O Father in Heaven!" And an unearthly, prolonged wail, like that of some lone animal shorn and cleaved from its dearly loved mate in some dark woodland, came from the lips of this Man of Doleful Woe. "Reared to method, taught dogmatical prayer, impressed not of My Love....they, these flowers, will in the insufficiency of faith fall from Me,....and be lost! Oh, oh, oh!...Men will deny Me,...laugh at My Name,....and be lost! Women will care naught for virtue,....will laugh at purity,....will be harlots and sinners. Infidelity will reign,—love be spurned and sacrileged,—sin, life's only joy. Men will marry uncongenial and unfitted women. Men will beat, starve, and abuse the few remaining pure women, the martyrs of Virtue . . . Priests will amass coin, preach of Me as being stern and cold, tell of My Father as a God of vengeance; they will sacrilege My mission for many will be out of their place in the Order. O Father, incestuous priests, personifying themselves as saints, will desecrate the very altars! will gaze to Heaven with base effrontery, congratulating themselves at their easy method of living! They will seduce women; and many, many will be lost. Worst of all, they will change My doctrine, inserting their dreadful laws:—a religion of priests will exist;—where will the fruits of My Love be?" A long shuddering sigh broke from His lips. "O Father," He went on, "the poor, the dearly beloved poor, will be slurred in the churches,

will be left uncared and unfed. Masses will not be said lest paid for—*where will be the fruits of My Love?*....Many will be called, but few chosen,—where will be the reward of My death! Aye, aye, aye, the very head of Christendom, so placed by the hands of men, will have to be seated on a ‘Papal throne,’—whereas to follow Me the earth and stone should be his mundane throne, then these would win a throne for him in the Kingdom of Heaven. Where will Faith be?” He paused, arose, and surveyed the air about Him, then He said:

“The very stars in Heaven are open to My circumspection—yet there is none so defiled as this one,—none” He paused, then wringing His pale hands, He cried vehemently, a cold perspiration oozing from His pores:

“O Abba, Father, the whole futurity of sin is unfurled to Me: I see every deed, and every crime which will be perpetrated! Every one is a pang to my heart! Oh, why need I so suffer and die? the majority of mankind will be lost to sorrow!” And He, gazing into the open inventory of crimes which would be done willingly by men, sank prostrate on the earth in dire, dejected misery. A moaning, fluttering sound whizzed through the heavy stifling air, as the Saviour of the world succumbed to pain and hard truth,—and pitiful was His excruciating agony and woe-begone pain. His every muscle became convulsed; His form trembled and writhed in the acutest, keenest pain; His eyes wildly protruded from their sockets; His lips moved in fervent, petitioning prayer. He deeply and heartfully

prayed, shedding tears as of anguished fire, which, as they fell, seemed to burn holes into, and scorch the ground. He prayed that those awful, dreadful things might be averted or lessened . . . He besought His Father in piteous appeals that sin might be completely obliterated from his globe, and that universal love might be accepted by men. He prayed that Man might do right, for Man alone can stop sin. Never, never was there in any man such a poignant, bitter, burning pain and sorrow. He swayed to and fro in overmastering throes of agony. His lips became hot and parched, and He became exceptionally weak; and the blood oozing from His pores was a proof of the purest, divinest Love that ever beat in the heart of Man. Many and many a sinner was, and is, being saved by those burning Tears, by that sacred Blood, by that superhuman Woe—for He has given the example of brotherly Love, Death, and Resurrection to Life.

“*Abba, Father,*” He said in loving resignation, full of dolorous pleading and supplication, “*all things are possible with Thee: if Thou wilt, remove this Chalice from Me: but yet not My will, but Thine, be done. Have mercy for, and forgive those that will wrong Me.*”

And He arose slowly and went to the sleeping men, and sadly said:

“*Why sleepest thou? couldst thou not watch one hour?*

“*Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.*”

While the Son of God shed burning tears, when His most awful passion began, His followers slept.—What a true type of the present seeming-Darwinian mankind! The Saviour lives in Heaven and perpetually loves; Man chooses to sleep in the darkness of error and sin.

Oh, I suffered with this God-Man? I dearly loved, truly loved, Him. Oh, how richly should not His love be rewarded;—what could ever repay such unselfish, saving pain? Man, think, meditate, and worthily love this One Perfect Man. Accept the Example. Stop His pure Sorrow.

He prayed again, and thought, and grieved. He saw every atrocious and malicious deviation and derogation from His Law which would be done in years to come. “The very prayers,” He moaned, “will be drummed off in verbose meaningless;—all I wish is simple, true, heartfelt prayer! And this will be, even though I suffer all this looming agony of judgment and ‘death.’ ”

What must not have been His stupendous, horrid torture! How terrible must not be every sin of men, if it almost discouraged the mission and broke the heart of a God! After a while, in a frenzied, agonized, frozen tone, the plaintive orison ascended to Heaven:

“Father, I have the prescience of all bad deeds which will inevitably come. Of what avail is My death? But *My Father, if this Chalice may not pass away, but I must drink it, Thy will be done!*”

And behold, I perceived a Radiant Angel before

Him! Around her head was a splendid coronal as of frosted silvery radiance; her face was as a refulgent sun. And a look of joyful love made her countenance surpassing in the extraordinary brilliancy of supernal light. She delivered the comforting and enlivening message:

“Weep not, O Lord, Thy death shall be of great avail. There shall be great fruit; for though many will not receive this proof of Thy Love, yet some will. And happily knowing that Thou hadst for them the greatest Love, proven by Thy dying, they will be saved. And the example is unsurpassable.”

“Aye, aye,” murmured Christ, a melancholy expression of piteous pain upon His face, “FOR THE SALVATION OF ONE SOUL I WOULD DIE. I shall prove My Love, and show Men how to die—and What follows. My death will be the Example of how Truth will always be martyred,—but how rewarded. But many of My sheep will be lost!” Then He arose, gazed Heavenward with a fixed, frenzied stare, and moaned an uncanny, piercing moan. He walked to the sleeping men, gazed pityingly at the oscitant disciples, and said:

“*What,—sleepest thou? couldst thou not watch one hour with Me?*”

“*Watch ye and pray that ye enter not into temptation; prayer can conquer all inclination to the indulgence of the things at variance with God's Law. The world will fall—because it will not truly pray. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.*”

And again, the third time He went and prayed. The Radiant Figure of lightning splendor and heavenly sheen, hovered in tremulous love before Him. For a long time He prayed in fervent, beseeching petitionings, then concludingly said:

“Though a renewal of ungodliness will be done, though churches will re-crucify Me and derogate from My Law, though nations will tremble at the name of earthly kings and scorn My Name, though men will entice Purity and commit heinous sins, yet I still love Man. I will prove My Love by Example. Some will be saved,—and though many be lost to pain, My mission will be perfect, and Man can follow Me. *My Father, if this Chalice may not pass from Me, but I must drink it, Thy will be done.*”

Then, as caught in a tremendous light-emblazoned cloud of fire, filled with wind-like music, the Angelic Messenger went up to Heaven. The Christ arose and went to the sleeping disciples . . . I was carried away;—the sublime scene of the sorrow in the Gethsemane Garden, on Mount Olives, where He was usually wont to pray, was vanished from my vision completely. . . . I was in that tremulous state of atonement and work. And again the intense longing for God drew me up towards the grand rolling World of prismatic glory divine. And my delirious longing and yearning became more unendurable.

“*Thy will, not Mine, be done.*” Ah, what a perfect submission was this God-Man’s. “*Thy will*, the will which leads all aright,—*not Mine*,—encased in

human flesh,—*be done*,—for other doing than Thine cannot be right." . . . Thus Jesus spake; thus He gave mankind the example—the one unparalleled, perfect, flawless Example, the Example for which the world had waited over six thousand years. In every episode connected with the life of Jesus there is a lesson for mortals, an example which the mortal is to follow. And this episode of the Garden, of how Jesus submitted to His coming sorrow, when He knew how many would scoff at and ignore the Love proven, is how we all must obey God. It is not a pure life which says, "I thank Thee, O God, for health, comfort, and joy;" but it is the true life—the life after the exemplified one of Jesus—which says, "I am afflicted; thanks be to Thee, O God. This affliction may be of some avail; it strengthens me, makes me more patient, more solicitous for the sorrows of others. And I thank Thee." Jesus, when He knelt in the Garden, saw the rebuffs, the sneers, the sufferings He would have to undergo; He saw His death upon a disgraceful tree; He saw Himself maligned,—and His mortal body quailed. Joyfully He wanted to give the example—the Example that only by endurance, submissive prayer, and love for fellow man, by the path of sorrow borne bravely, by suffering the condemnation of men and having the favor of God, can Immortality be reached. And to give this sublime, unselfish example, there were necessitated bodily pain, anguish of soul and earthly misprizal,—and His humanity recoiled from this physical pain, His soul recoiled from the sins which He saw would not, could

not, be averted,—but God's will was supereminent, God's will alone was obeyed.

Thus all should comfort themselves in the sorrow that leads to the Cross and Death,—and this Death is but transition. God's will obeyed, others unselfishly warned, helped, and suffered for, love strengthening the spark of life,—this being done,—the Soul in his Cross, on the Altar of the world's misprizal will attain the culmination of the purpose of its creation,—and Heaven by the “valley of death” will be given; and by the resurrection of Truth over Lie, will Right be proven.

By the Example of His passion—the nonpareil Example for which the world waited ten thousand years, and which the majority of the world has rejected for two thousand years—we see how Goodness and Truth are scorned, rejected, and seemingly submerged by leering Untruth; but the Resurrection proves that the temporary rule of Untruth is only seeming,—and eventually Truth rises, for it is absolutely impossible to conquer Truth with Lie. Lie has a fabric dark and strong, but no foundation; Truth is, on this world, seemingly frail and weak, but it has an invulnerable foundation—God Himself.

Writing now I know the cause of His agony. Then at the occurring of it I knew and felt only in part, for then darkness was upon me—now is Light. And as an angel of light, I am sent, I come to warn the world of its probable Doom—the Doom which Christ foresaw,—the Doom that is awful. I know what is the penalty of sin, hence in love I warn. . . .

Now I am in Light; and now I see my "visions" fulfilled. And the worst and most evil-generating fulfillment is the absence of Christianity in hearts which are supposed to be pure. This is the seed of Evil,—this is the cause of the Sacrilege of Love To-day. Subtle are the obscurities and iniquities of the prelates and princes of the Church and the State. *The abomination of desolation* is insufferably palpable in its unbridled sway. Ah, and Christ would be desolate were He on earth. Think you that if He were to come as an itinerant beggar He would receive shelter from, that good clothing would be given Him by, the corpulent "prelates" and lean "preachers?" Would these individuals, whose chief characteristic is an erubescient nose, a protuberant, well-filled pouch, and a self-convinced brain, give the Christ help? No;—they are too busy plotting how to gain money (by religious shrines or bazaars) to give any time to charity . . . I sacrileged Love by want of Religion, . . . and Religion is wanting To-day.

I love—Oh, how I love Him! . . . He is in Heaven, I am of Heaven. On earth He loved and forgave me: in Heaven He still loves and forgives. I know this; I know His Law. Man can easily learn it; and I shall help him. In Love I shall do as Love commands, as a receiver of God's bountiful Love should do. Being now on earth, in the chronicle of Jardac and me, I will draw the reader's attention to facts as they are.

As ages went by, men inserted and interpolated their defiled teachings and beliefs to suit their own

selfish selves. Doing specious good, they did incalculable harm;—and “the doctrines and commandments of men” are so grafted on His Law that no church is true. . . .

Truth is nowadays hard to find. Instead of having its steps accelerated, it is retarded. Many try to find it, grasp for it—the worker, the thinker, the philanthropist, the prelate, and the unsectarian theologian. Truth is an elusive thing nowadays,—and why?—Simply because one is so environed by Untruth, so strong is the sway of Lie.

Like an unimpeded engine in locomotion, **roaring** with flagrant Lies, having for fuel specious **Truth**, crushing in its grinding, murderous force, in the track of a lost Sphere, in the never ending space of Eternity, weighed in the balance and found wanting, Irreligion steams abroad. Like a grewsome thing—fair without, and within full of blood-stained gold, damned souls and Death, with a history of Shame indelibly written upon it in condemning characters of flame: a history bearing the appalling words, **PAPACY**, **INQUISITION**, **RAPINE**, **THEFT**, **MURDER**, **IMPURITY**, and **AVARICIOUSNESS**,—it awaits the end grasping with withered hands—Gold. Besmirching empires, republics, and congregations, breeding a pestilence of **INFIDELITY**, **LUST**, and **EGOTISM**, bringing with it the effluvia of incense of pagan Rome, orisons to idols, and altars to “**THE UNKNOWN GOD**,” it has swallowed into its cavernous bosom, Good, Virtue, and Love. Insatiety, voracious gormandism, imperialism, and gold, have all their thrones in this Temple of Ini-

quity—IRRELIGION :—In it are the nations—Sects ; the rulers—Popes, Kings, Queens ; the altars—*To the Unknown God.*—Aye, God is unknown in the sad world To-day.

Does the insatiable lust of gain obviously revealed in St. Peter's tell of Christ's poverty and His love of the poor? Does the mixing of the Crown and the Church tell that " My Kingdom is not of this world? " NO—No—No . . . *When the Son of Man cometh, think ye He shall find faith on earth?*—Yes, if Faith were to be found in the suppositions and spurious "Christian Churches"—which Church must eventually go into *the pool burning with fire and brimstone.*

True, there are a *few* faithful servants :—there are those who frantically cleave, with a fanatical adoration, to the Churches,—but is this pleasing to Christ?

Answer it, reader.

I, who love Christ,—I, who know,—I, who see,—I, one of millions of His Kingdom, am allowed to visit the world where I sinned and was forgiven ; and to help it, I am allowed to narrate my chronicle partly. And in giving a timely warning, I must say that the greatest evil which environs the world, with a copious shroud, is Irreligion, *i. e.*, the absence of Religion where Religion is supposed to be.

So in my tales, I do a little towards helping poor, degenerated Humanity. Humanity needs some brave ones who would think, who would act as Jesus would act. But if such a one were to step forward, would not many of the insignificant units called "preachers" and "critics" sneer at him? hurl invectives at him?

speak blatantly of him as a "meretricious charlatan?" True: but was not even Christ spat upon and crucified? Yes; and so is, forever on this earth, Genius, Truth, and Love.

The Key of Heaven is in the Gospels—Gospels taken in their true significance—*i. e.*, neither changed nor taken literally. But is the Gospel thus preached by the derelict clergy? Most decidedly—NO.

Were I to appear in my blinding, spiritual glory behind the Papal Throne, I would be christened with a name and placed in the calendar. And orisons, rich with magniloquent language, would be wafted to me by the adulating, ignorant laity; and many charitable ladies, desirous of my "patronage," would "will" the Church "something."

"How lovely! How lovely is it not that we have a saint to pray to—a saint who lived as we do, who suffered, and who died, who can obtain favors quicker from God than we can ourselves," think all good adherents of the Roman Church.

How utterly ridiculous; how wholly irreligious; how blatantly blasphemous! The idea!—By this one infers that God will more readily give the creature what He needs by the "intercession" of the special saint than if he were to ask himself. As though the saint knew better the needs of the sinner than the Creator! . . . When John the Apostle knelt down to worship the angel, as recorded in the "Apocalypse" or "Revelations," the angel said: "See thou do it not: for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them that keep the words of the

prophecy of this book. ADORE GOD." And so we all, spirit in the flesh and spirit out of the flesh, should as the spirits out of the flesh do, adore only God. Never did Christ command or ask men to worship an angel or a saint, but "*thus therefore thou shalt pray, Our Father who art in Heaven! . . .* God is the Creator and Lover of souls: hence to Him only, should we—His beloved creatures—make supplication, "*for your Father knoweth that you have need of all these things.*"

But the good servant of the Church would not listen to such "demoralizing rant;" "the Church is infallible; it alone may interpret the Bible." Thus the Word of God is disregarded; the Church upheld. Yet I who say this, am a greater saint than many that are canonized.

Love and pray for your neighbor, is Christ's wish. Said He: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." And this is not the kept law of the Sects.

"The Roman Catholics are idol-worshippers, hypocrites, murderers. They eat Communion like hogs. Their nuns are secret sinners. We are better than they. Our Lord loves us better and will help us; and we shall get to beautiful Zion. There we shall travel the golden streets and play golden harps," say many good Protestants. They do not seem to be aware of the tell-tale phrase, "If thine eyes be evil, thy whole body shall be darksome."

And between the two factions of "Christianity," Christ is re-crucified again and again. With preachers eloping with other men's wives, etc., and bazaars, and

denunciations against the Romanists on one side,—with saint-worship, a kingdom of this world, an arrogant priesthood, and superstition on the other: and with both a disregard of Christ and His teaching, we cannot fail to see that the end must soon come. Corruption is in the governments of the world, hypocrisy in the religions—“and when you see the *abomination of desolation standing where it ought not*: he that readeth let him understand . . . Take ye heed, watch and pray. For ye know not what the time is. . . . And what I say to you I say to all: WATCH.” Christ in the Garden foresaw this, and prayed against it.

Then, hear ye the Word of God. Let no bigoted church close Heaven upon you, but reject the “false christs and false prophets,” and follow Christ. “Go, then, and learn what this meaneth, *I will have mercy, and not sacrifice.*” Christ came, the Great Physician, to heal the sick and the ill. He wishes to cure their griefs and infirmities. He does not wish their sorrows (even as “penance”); but He wishes to cure the lame, the halt, and the blind. “I will not have sacrifice but—LOVE.”

Picture the simple Christ, the God in Man, treading the softly carpeted aisles of a great, gilded cathedral, clothed in rich vestments of sickening embroidery and gold, swinging a jeweled censer and sprinkling “holy water.” Picture Him thus,—place Him where His “ministers” are——!!!

And if His ministers wish to follow Him, may they do what He would not do, what would be incongruous to Him? If He in His Truth was simple, dare His

servants be elaborate in empty Form? Truly Goethé says: "The Good, the True, and the Excellent are always simple;—Error is elaborate."

Hence dare the priests act in a paganish circus of ostentatious display? Yet what is the Church?—A circus where the nondescript audience—the "Four Hundred"—kneel and growl out in their hearts the lion-like roaring for More—more Sensualism and more Sin; a circus which is spectacular with elaborate scenic effects of symbolic gild and dross, and where the pandering clowns—clergymen—cater to the gold-lined pockets of the wealthy laity, singing their trite songs of mere words and delivering witty "sermons;" a reeking circus where the nude female gymnast—Hypocrisy—plays on ropes to the gratification of the audience, and whose exposed legs—nice to the eye, but full of saw-dust—constitute the pleasure of men; a mundane circus where the protagonist "hears confession" of, and "gives absolution" to, the trained donkey who kicks twenty times for "penance," and who never intends to cease his noisome braying. . . .

What a sad and deplorable contrast between the existing "Christian" Church and true Christianity! The horror of the Lie would naturally bring angels from Heaven—angels who loved, sinned, suffered, and now know; angels whose own experience on earth contain a lesson—a lesson after the Great Lesson,—that of Christ. And in His life of example, His sorrow in seeing the decline of the world before Him was inconsolable, beyond bounds. Hence He sends me, one of the least of His Kingdom, to give my life connected

with Him to the world, so as to show that the most heinous sin God will forgive, that for the worst sinner Heaven is open, what His love and grief for men was and is—hence I come, tell, and warn. Hence I narrate His sorrow so that the world may know,—my life of love and sin and pardon as an example of His Mercy, the terribleness of the Sacrilege of Love,—warn because I know His Love, what Spiritual Pain is; for I know the sad fruit of Insufficiency of Religion.

CHAPTER XII.

THE CONSUMMATION OF THE SAVIOUR'S MISSION.

THE SUBLIME TRAGEDY OF CALVARY was before me when I was before Christ the world's Saviour again.

"Greater Love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for a friend."

A roaring wind of awe-inspiring weirdness heralded the Greatest Proof of Love, passing over the mountain—the Temple of Love, up to the sky—the dome.

Upon a rudely made Cross hung the almost nude Christ. The extreme pains and fierce tortures of dissolution were becoming plainly discernible upon Him. The sacred limbs stretched upon the wood quivered and writhed in convulsive twists of pain,—His face wore a pre-human expression of angelic sadness and wronged love,—pitiful wrongs wounded His Soul. All the tortures of a body in the extremes of pain, all the agonies and anguish of a soul in the utmost misery were experienced by this dying King. He gazed with a far-off expression into the heavens;—He seemed to—and did—penetrate the veil, and saw thousands of worlds circling and existing in vast space;—then His head drooped low in meek sadness, and tender tears of unselfish pity trickled from His gentle eyes, and a pro-

longed wail, the most piteous of an anguished soul, broke from His pure lips and sounded on the hushed silence of the awe-struck air. The very tension of this mystic silence was awesome and dreadful. On each side of the Cross was a thief also crucified on a cross. And gazing at this awful portrayal of man's sanguinary bestiality, I heard some one cry derisively:

"He saved others, Himself He cannot save."

Many smiled at this, nodding approval, and gazing at the suffering "Nazarene" to see whether it had any effect on Him. But His sad face was inscrutable. Then one woman—a woman whose face was that of an angel, and whose soul was that of a fiend—approached the Cross and maliciously laughing, she pointed to Him and cried:

"What an exquisite physique! O King of the Jews, come down from this gibbet, this disgraceful tree,—and Thou shalt lie in mine arms, and Thine hours, instead of sermonizing hours, shall be hours of rapture. Truly Thou art beautiful!" And turning to the people—"The animal is too beautiful to die thus,—too beautiful to live in purity!—Look at the delicacy of the soft flesh!"

And she boldly walked to the Cross, . . . gazed at the face of the Christ, . . . put forth her soft, delicate hand to touch the suffering Saviour's quivering flesh, . . . but—suddenly,—a whole world of roaring fire seemed to overwhelm her, . . . and she fell writhing in convulsions.

One of the Pharisees came running to the spot, anxiously bent over the beautiful creature, swearing

at, and cursing the "Nazarene." She was then carried away, and the enraged Pharisee ran up to the Cross, confronting the Man of Sorrows.

"Thou accursed demon," he snarled, "knowest Thou what Thou hast done to my—my——" He broke off in confusion; the word "mistress" had almost fallen from his defiled lips.

"Nay, He is not a demon," said a wealthy oxen-seller, his face undergoing hideous contortions, "He is the Son of God—He—He—He! He lashed Me out of the Temple—ME! No one but the Son of God would dare do that!" He went up to the Cross—"See how I love the Son of God—" And he spit forth on to the sacred flesh some fetid saliva.

Many others came and reviled Him, hurled blasphemous phrases at Him, and no consideration was shown Him. And so it is To-day: no consideration is shown in the condemnation of Genius and Truth. And following this Divine Example, all should say for our enemies, as He did, "Forgive them, Father, for they know not what they do."

"*If thou be Christ, save Thyself and us,*" cried the one thief, blaspheming Him.

"*Neither dost thou fear God,*" said the other in sad reproach, "*seeing thou art under the same condemnation?*"

"*And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this Man hath done no evil.*"

He groaned, and suddenly turned to the crucified Saviour, and in a beseeching, fervent tone, almost inaudibly said:

"Lord, remember me—when Thou shalt come . . . into Thy Kingdom!"

"Amen, Amen," answered the dying Christ in a loving tone, *"this day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise."*

At the hearing of this most hopeful and surpassing promise, the thief's perturbed and pain-distorted countenance changed into one of tranquil peace and expectant love;—and in the ecstatic sense of joyful expectation, his head sank low . . . and he afterward died.

Suddenly, as a spark blown out, the sun decame obscured by dark shapes and disappeared from mortal sight, but He shone plainly distinct in pure white brilliancy in the dense darkness. Nearby in the darkness, never deserting Him, was one whose angelic beauty was truly celestial, but who was in the extremes of purely maternal sorrow and compassionate pain—His Mother . . . The darkness was fraught with pregnant mystery, . . . and presently a huge, colossal cloud of luminous red fire, appalling in its stupendous magnitude, awful in its amazing vastness, and crushing in the terror it imparted, came rolling slowly along in the dark heavens, . . . and it hovered sentiently above the central Cross.

Suddenly there sounded the roar as of a far-off ominous rumbling, as of a perturbation and war between conflicting caverns in subterranean places. It became more audible, and . . . slowly, . . . it came near, nearer, . . . and it was as a roaring thunder underground. The earth hove like the billowy waves of a sea in restless commotion. After a while of sus-

pense the earth before the Cross opened . . . and thick, belching flames ascended high into the air—an eerie, seething sound came from out this fiery chasm of terrifying flame and spiral conflagration.

Tapering in symmetrical twists and pyramidal forms, in changing colors of brilliant crimson, unearthly blue, pale white, and green, and mixed with sooty smoke, it sibilantly hissed and writhed, and . . . in the sinuous tongue of every jetty flame was a soul in awful torment. In every restlessly twisting, ever-changing colored, smoky tongue of this weird fire, was the model form of an anguished soul. His death was to save souls from pain by showing the sequent Life. And I knew that a Great Love was being consummated; but I never had the faintest suggestion of the grand fecundity of this spectacular scene. A God nailed to a tree! The Powers of Heaven moving Nature a-trembling, I gazed at the Tragedy in tremulously expectant and dreadfully horrified awe. Hissing in fury, sooty smoke grotesquely darkening the volcanic fire, with a swift swirl and a deafening rumble and a growling roar, this ignivomous pit of subterranean smoke and fuliginous fire closed. And at that moment, a strange white lightning curiously flew and danced and played, and hovered lambently about the inscriptions on the Cross—

“JESUS OF NAZARETH, KING OF THE JEWS.”

Almost all of the startled spectators were prostrated, procumbent upon the ground, crying for light in a confused and jumbled scramble, and in a fearful, terrified

fright. Many deeds, strange and unreal, both bad and good, were perpetrated before the circumspecting Eyes of Love so sweet and divine.

Across the troublously thundering clouds, I saw mystic tongues of forked coruscant lightning of singularly blinding blue and crimson, flashed alternately. Presently . . . a glowing, silvery, delicate crown of light became visible above the thorn-crowned Head bowed low, from which slowly trickled drops of pure red Blood. Ah, how I loved the Suffering God!

The dead appeared to many in this Stygian darkness, illumined only by the preternatural illuminations. For a long time thus it remained—then, after three hours of darkness . . . as rent forcibly asunder, amid the roaring of angry thunder, the darkness became quickly enubilated, and slowly rolled and melted away, dissolving into space. The red sun shone as some huge, bloody shield behind the Majestic Man of Sorrows on the Cross. The Magdalene was then seen to be prostrate at the Saviour's feet; His flowing blood dyed crimson her golden hair! Near-by was the Virgin Mother, all a perfect mother's love, all a true mother's sorrow, all a faithful mother's commiseration, bespeaking themselves upon her. In her eyes was a look of pure ecstasy and sadness. Others were near,—even Satan. Bowed low in sentient, shamed confusion and love, he gave vent to rending groans and awfully despairing cries. He frenziedly beat his bosom and dolorously lamented his fate, longed for and besought forgetfulness and respite from pain.

“Is it strange that I hate Man when such a chance

is to him given, subject to his rejection, while I for such a Chance, whereby to redeem myself and return to that lost Home of perennial beauty of surpassing delights, I would do—oh, what would I not do! Yet I am made weaker in influencing—for that I am glad,—some of my burdens will be mitigated. O dear loving Christ, have mercy! Have mercy though I cannot, will not, cease to hate.”

The sun grew brighter; it seemed to stare aghast in startled wonder at the Pageant of a World's Salvation.

A noise suddenly quivered through the gloom. His body writhed and strenuously convulsed in the agonized throes and frightful pains of approaching dissolution. His tender eyes rolled upwards and downwards in the most excruciating pangs and torturing pains of body and soul. His lips mutely moved,—and they became burningly parched. His breath came in operose, slow, and convulsed gasps. He gave vent to shuddering sighs—sighs of longing for love. He saw in that awful, terrific moment all the fearful crimes that would be done in coming ages—how vain for many that Death would be. All the pains of an unrewarded love were most horribly felt by this divinest Love. Death of the most painful kind, full of poignant longings and pains, was near. And strangely I longed for His release from flesh.

I felt as though I were compressed and confined. I longed for a union with Him. Tremendous thunder, in a deafening din of rattling roar, reverberated and volleyed around me in such lion-like fury

and prolix roaring, that it seemed to rend the heavens. Darkness thick and sooty, through which I saw hosts of spectral, dismal faces, with looks of awful, pallid, frozen yet hopeful woe upon them, I saw. I seemed, as it were, entering some indefinitely dark, illimitable, awesome chasm of eternally frozen darkness and despair, when, as bells toning on a breeze, I heard the words, uttered in a painfully fervid tone:

"Eli, Eli, lamma sabacthani."

Then, as in a sea of molten glory I moved closer to the Cross, whereon He whom I loved and adored was dying.

The sun, reposing amid beautifully roseate clouds of sunset glory, with scalloped edges of silver and gold, was sinking behind Calvary's historic mountain. And the rays, shining upon His face transfigured its pain into heavenly beauty.

"I thirst," was feebly muttered by this Sweetest Love.

Vinegar on a sponge was given to Him by a near-by soldier. And at that instant, as on golden pinions of blinding brilliancy and light, an Angel Celestial descended from Heaven with lightning velocity and celestial speed to the Cross, and bowing low, a look of the most exquisite love upon its beaming face, it waited for an expected summons or command.

"Carmena!" was presently uttered by a grandly piercing Voice from above.

Then . . . music sonorous, grand, and sublime, floated—like a rich sea of terrific, exquisite, enthralling melody—through the air. Then the angel sang, in a

tone piercing in its surpassing richness and exquisite sweetness and fullness, the song:

“O glory, glory be to Thee,
Of grandeur full, a seething sea
Of sweet, surpassing melody—
The melody of fervent prayer.
The world from Death is truly saved,
The Path to Heaven is well paved—
Paved by the Cross of Grief and Love.

“The bleeding heart shall bleed no more;
Hereafter God they will adore.
Oh, angels, come, and hither bring,
While the world does take the Lesson,
All love to Christ, the sad world's King.
Come, come, the bells do sweetly ring—
Glory to Christ—God, Saviour, King.”

Then the wondrous Face of marvellous, gentle Love gazed at the world before Him. His indescribably awful pains were seemingly lessened; His passionate grief was abated. The Soul purely divine was ready to leave the Body perfect and pure . . . He gave the world a gaze of transcendent, rapt, and unequalled Love;—a grand ecstasy transfigured that Holy Face into a beamingly refulgent sun of yearning Love, boundless Mercy, and tender Pity. Then . . . slowly . . . a look of pardoning pity, sweet and thrilling, began to shine from that Countenance of Love Supreme; and He gave a farewell gaze to earth—such a Gaze! such as never again would the sad world receive,—a look of wondrous pardon, merciful pity, and marvellous Love divine. Suddenly around the thorn-crowned

Head, aureole-like, circled a circular stream of sublime rainbow fires, from which colored stars of wondrous beauty were emitted arrow-like! And in this tangent glory of supernatural beauty, the vortex of Love at hand, the expiring Saviour cried in marvellous, entrancing tones, silver bells chiming sweetly with pure Heavenly melody upon the air:

"Father, . . ." He said, "into Thy hands . . . I commend . . . My Spirit."

His divine head fell. Torture unnameable, mixed with unspeakable, fervent, unbounded joy, convulsed His most pure Form, which as polished marble gleamed in the oblique rays of the setting sun. And as He writhed, the sword tacitly pierced His heart, . . . water and blood flowed out of the wound, . . . His body ceased to quiver, . . . and His head bowed low. Several seconds of strained suspense elapsed, then the Holy Form again writhed and twisted, as though to extricate itself from the rude Tree, . . . a dark shadow seemed to fall over the whole earth, . . . the ground rocked and seethed with audible underground roaring, . . . the red sun quivered and pulsated in the heavens, . . . and the roseate clouds swept the heavens staring aghast and affrighted at the strange scene of love unfurled below them. Women—both sinners and angels—were at the foot of the Cross. The rabble was spell-bound in mute and silent terror. Never had any one died thus, so strangely! At the same moment, a liquid, delicious, mellifluent melody floated in amorously dulcet tones upon the breeze; and an odoriferous zephyr of almost unexcelled sweetness

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permeated the air. Lightning quivered in the heavens . . . And that tangent, starry glory playing beautifully in strange contrast with the other manifestations around His head, silvery radiance dazzlingly playing on the beams of the Cross, He gave a last gasp, . . . the Body relaxed, . . . silence and deeper darkness fell. The bird's amorous song ceased; the earth ceased to tremble and roar; the sun ceased to pulsate; the lightning suddenly stopped its fantastic play; only the tangent Glory around His head was mystically there. The disturbed air in perturbation seemed as it were in troubled expectancy. And after that gasp, His eyes rolled in a glance—a look of the Greatest Love and Tenderest Pity imaginable,—and they became suffused with tears. There was a strange sound as of sighs of pain, in the dismal gloom, . . . and *He was dead*. . . .

Yes, Jesus was dead—but alive in glory in Real Life. His Mission was over; His task was well done. He had lived in Love, died in Love, proved Love—He was incarnate Love. Truly says that man Emerson—“*Love is our highest word; and the synonym of God.*” Love embraces all—has embraced all, for the Saviour has brought Love from Heaven, planted it on the earth—and His death proved that pure unselfish Love, and His Resurrection proves Love's *life*.

“*Truly this is the Son of God,*” was the late cry of recognition from many.

Off in a remote, secluded place were several priests. On their acrimonious, sneering, crafty faces was a look of triumphant hate and satisfied malice. These pol-

troons of hypocrisy fondly felt safe from any future exposure.

Thus, with a great love of man, mercy for all, and for sinners pardon, surrounded by tricksters and hypocrites, He died. Thus the Embodiment of the Greatest Love, of the most wondrous Mercy, died. Such was a God's love—God's own, unselfish, ineffable Love and Divine Pardon. Thus was the Consummation of the greatest, sweetest, and most unselfish Love demonstrated and proven to Man.

As the Divine Pardoner of Sins left the mortal Form, He came into the Spirit World in the God-like glory of dazzling empyrean beauty of His. And . . . as His Head fell inert, I beheld to my exceeding joy and ecstatic amazement a figure bound to the burdened Cross, which seemed as ustulate matter, and clasp his virile arms about the dead Body of a God Incarnate. He cried:

“O Jesus of Nazareth—Saviour of the World—God incarnated in flesh—Spirit of God, of Light, of Love, let me not alone in this drear and sinful world. Thou . . . Holy One . . . Thou hast saved me, . . . lift me from death to Life, from pain to Love! Thou Loving Jesus, . . . give . . . to—me . . . my—love, . . . *Nathana.*”

And in frenzied longing and fervent love, he kissed the dead body of the world's Redeemer. Then a beaming smile of ecstatic rapture passed over his care-worn countenance—it seemed that he saw an unexpected vision of a distant glory grand. With a sudden

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bound he leaped into the air, . . . shook, . . . uttered a choking cry, . . . and fell—dead.

HE WAS BY ME, MY SOUL'S OWN DEAR, LONGED-FOR COMPANION. . . .

"Soul of Nathana," he cried, and his voice was melody sweet to me, "forgive me. As I wronged thee, leading Pure Love astray, now I am at thy mercy. If thou dost hate me, . . . revenge is thine. Satisfaction so exact as to be terrible is the Law. Atonement is necessary—atonement or pardon . . . O!—O!—marvellous is the Justice! Terrible is the hating soul's Revenge! Dost thou hate me? or forgive me?—to be in Love . . . together?"

"I forgive thee, Soul of Love," I cried, "I love thee, Soul of Mine."

I was not unrepentant—I forgave him. Thus do I beseech all to be—lenient, loving, merciful. With the soul who has been wronged and hates, rests revenge—and revenge is terrible. Christ wishes all to have satisfaction, but not Revenge. O souls of mortals, think ere you lead one astray, or murder, or do any wrong—beware of the just Retribution, when Satisfaction will be denied! Let the man who seduces a girl to sin beware!—he is not free—he makes himself a slave, a debtor. Let the false wife beware—let her beware of coming Justice, of Revenge! Let all sinners beware—sinners who are slaves in shackles that can be taken off only by—Love. O mortals, forgive and ask forgiveness! *As ye mete to others, so shall it be meted to you.* Pray for, have for others—Love and Mercy.

O wondrous, inexplicable joy of Love! O rapture of Completion! Jardac was by me—my Love . . . O, what exquisite, almost unendurable delight!

Words are inadequate to express the joy—the joy of Perfect Heaven!

The Saviour blessed the World,—and the World was reborn—reborn to Love, Faith, Purity, and Heaven. His Mission was done—He did all things well.

Tremendous thunder and rattling, furious roar! Lightning of supernal brilliancy dazzled our visions, shooting in pre-natural glory around and about us—then . . . lo! we were before Christ—the Saviour and Redeemer of the World—the Risen from the Dead—the God of Mercy and Love—again. He was at Bethania, speaking to the mortal men that were before Him. And as we gazed, He raised His dazzling Hand and blessed them—And as we steadfastly watched Him in expectant joy, He rose! . . . Many angelic spirits were there,—many were waiting to ascend with Him. Higher . . . He rose. A cloud filled with a summer's sunrise glory—pink in dazzling symmetry and beauty—sailed below Him. Higher,—still higher . . . The mortals on earth with strained gaze, and sad at His going, gazed longingly and regretfully after Him. Then . . . His Heavenly Glory became plainly manifest—What beauty was there!—pen cannot nearly adequately describe that supernal, congruous grandeur . . . He was Music, Flame, and Beauty.

He rose on a misty pedestal of dazzling emerald and

frosted silver clouds of fire. Hundreds of angels of sweet heavenly purity were around this pedestal of brilliant beauty ; they were the souls of the infants who had been ruthlessly slain by my seeking, at the instigation of Satan, for love's incestuous desires, for which I dearly paid, for which I now felt happy. About this dazzling pedestal of supernal clouds and flame were millions of soft glorious flowers of a thousand thousand changing hues ; vines and leaves of heavenly beauty grew and sprung up in the air about Him,—all beauty was there. Angels hovered near Him—this God. . . . All was Light, Color, Music. . . . Behind Him was a silver-gray cloud—the very clouds caressed Him . . . O He was bright, glorious ! He seemed like the consuming apparition of a newly created sun. And on either side of Him were two great Angels—beautiful and grand. The glories that were there were numberless, beyond all telling grand.

Music loud and joyous, strains sonorous and divine, songs sweet and celestial were everywhere. The music of the rolling spheres died away into silence compared with the melody and music of His Presence. As He ascended high, higher, the inhabitants of many planets offered hymns to Him, the rising God,—they drank in the glory of the transcendent Vision, and exulted in the joyful rapture of His passing. That Holy Face—so exalted, so inexpressibly grand—was and IS a Vision of love. Up—up . . . with the rapidity of lightning we rose. Higher ! The glories grew grander, the polyphonic music more sublime. And as we rose higher, upwards, a more delicious, entrancing,

joyous, jubilant strain of divine Music throbbed about us. And to its grandly martial strains we rose still, still higher. The silver-gray cloud behind the God-Man manifested, melted and vanished . . . and a burning, dazzling molten Glory was behind Him. Behind Him appeared a Cross of flashing, prismatic fires. Like an *aurora borealis* in ever changing beauty, in beams of dazzling molten gold, in parallel shafts of frosty silver light, in meteor-flashing flame, in colored streaks of blinding, colored fire—holding the glory of dawn, the beauty of sunset, the Sign of Salvation shone in brilliant, supernal glory behind the Divine One, its marvellous shafts of flame consuming the living skies. From Him radiated a luminous, flaming Halo of white empyrean light. And then . . . in the unmarred beauty of the turquoise and roseate heavens, delicate threads of golden light formed into interwoven, intricate webs of shimmering beauty. It quiveringly filled all the visible space, as it were of a spider's wondrous, golden web. . . . And continually below us, amid restless, heaving, trembling clouds full of radiated glory, were many colored coruscations of electric stars. There was the sweet sound of fluttering wings; the melodious sound as of birds sweetly singing; the seething, rushing sound of crystalline water-falls; the tolling of sublime silver bells;—and thunder had for a while rattled and crashed in musical, reverent roaring. . . .

Away down . . . far, far down was the circling World—now a black speck. . . . We passed many spheres of populated beauty. . . . I exulted in over-

flowing joy. I was at peace,—in the Greatest Love Most Holy!

And lo! . . . as He gazed at the vanishing Speck, a look of the most exquisite, ardent, holy Love shone from that glorious Face of lightning splendor. A Gaze of Love unexcelled He gave to Earth. He raised His empyrean-illumined Hand in a beneficent Benediction, . . . and as this great Benison was given to the sad world—a flood of spiritual fire seemed to flow downwards, and a Path to Heaven was made—the Path of His Love. Sweetly toned bells vibrated through the void ; music of war, love, and peace, of harmony perfect, was here ; clouds of glowing grandeur were lambently about us and Light was everywhere. And as on a gentle wind, the words floated on the air: “I AM THE WAY, THE LIGHT, AND THE TRUTH: NO MAN COMETH TO THE FATHER BUT BY ME.”

What a magnanimous, perpetual, immeasurable Love is not the God-Love! . . . With lightning speed we rose. The araneous webs of fire were melting in the glory of molten liquid flames above us! Higher, . . . into glory surpassing that of the sidereal flowers, . . . starry constellations sang carols to us, . . . on,—upwards,—higher. . . .

And again . . . that Smile of yearning, exquisite, incomparable Love from the most dazzling Face of Light of all, was given to the dark, nether world. Such a Love never will this world again have lavished in plenteous munificence upon it. Love for sinners,—pity for sinners,—yearning for sinners, were in this

God Divine. In life, while on earth, He had said: "For the Son of Man is come to save that which was lost." And He did His utmost to obtain and give sinners life.—He gave His life,—and His unlimited, most sweet and tender Love.

O what a grand, excessively amazing and stupendous glory of rainbow colors and electric fires were above us! . . . What a strong, invincible Blaze of Majestic Glory was swallowing us up! . . . Christ was God transfigured into His real beauty sublime! . . . Angels in multitudinous throngs sang in heavenly, rippling strains, . . . clashing music supremely charming and sweet in its enthralling harmony, surged through the glory, . . . clouds of saffron and pure white flame were about us, . . . fire empyrean glowed above us in indescribable grandeur, . . . and circles of argent glowing mist and vapor eddyingly swarm around in a whirlpool of gyrating splendor!

Suddenly . . . the Face of Love turned to us, and joyously in the sweetest accents imaginable, said:

"Behold the World of Heaven—the Perfect Home of God! This is the World of Love—of beauty, flowers, sweets, and joys! This is the World for which I have saved the earth—this the World waiting for men! A little endurance, patience, and work—Immortality—then Heaven. This the World of unparalleled Love—created in Love, for Love, kept by LOVE. Love is the joy of Souls—the wondrous bliss of Heaven, sweet in Hell even. For this, O Souls of Men, to bring you here, have I lived and died. Follow

Me—in poverty, misprizal, and work....and enter Here; no man cometh to the Father but by Me.”

Loud, enthralling, jubilant, and serene music was everywhere. O, unutterable Joy! O, ravishing transport! O, wild ecstasy! . . . Unchangeable love was dominant as we entered, following the King.

O, Glory! . . . truly hath Saint Paul said: “The eye of man hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered the heart of man to know the things which God hath prepared for those who love Him.”

Into the Kingdom of Heaven, into delights and joys free from retrograding mutability! Environed by rapturous, beaming faces angelic,—in transcendent bliss,—in surpassing love,—in the empyreal glory of Heaven! . . . I saw my beloved mother when I entered therein. . . . There sin hath no place. There all work is grandly, munificently rewarded. There no sorrow darkens joy. There, in God, all is divine Love:—O what a great Reward! O Man, only try to win this holy place. It is beyond the comprehension of men to know! . . . O the bliss of the soul's brimful joy! O the immensity of the thrilling intensity of rapture! O, the ecstatic balmy rest—where birds in accents of love perpetually sing,—where flowers of never-fading beauty bloom and are redolent with the sweetest scents,—where the luscious fruits are delicious and undecayable,—where lustrous angels in dulcet tones forever sing,—where over all this bewildering, shining grandeur, GOD is the LIGHT SUPREME. The immensity of delicious odor, mellifluent song, eternal beauty, and Divinest Love are to be easily had, O Man—simply by

fulfilling the simple, clear Law of Christ—the Sweetest Love that ever walked upon mundane sod.

Always in unceasing thanks and never-lessening joy, in the eternal ecstasy, joy and majesty of the purity of Heaven and God, with the souls of the slain Innocents and the angels, we sing glorious anthems and hymns of praise; always we drink in the inexsuperable Glory of His Presence, the unsurpassable music of His Tones, the superabundant delights of His Kingdom. And this is forever. O so calm, so sweet, so restful is Heaven. O—O—so grand, so dearly loving is He. And ever is that beatific and serene Spirit of pure Love before us, with us, loving us, gifts giving us, beauties showing us, marvels displaying to us, O what grandeur is that of His world! Nature's glories there blossom in perfection; floriferous vegetation blooms and thrives on rocks impregnated with the life of His Being; fruit grows on trees of perpetual green, and beautiful trees are of color and fire, growing out of empyreal cascades—cascades rushing over rocks of jewels and flame, shooting into space with music divine,—and, O, in the light, they do shine. . . . The glories, the beauties I cannot describe; words fail in the thought of this sphere, its marvels and immeasurable expanse, its inhabitants and wondrous Ruler, whose Breath is its life, whose Love its foundation. This is all awaiting the mortals on the sad earth;—it is to lead them there He died.

For a long time I have enjoyed this perfect peace . . . All the joys dreamt of on earth,—all the beauties desired in the world,—all the happiness longed for, are to be had in perfect form in the World of God on

High. No superior recompense for a good life could possibly be had.

I enjoy and live in this grandeur;—I am on earth—yet I am perfectly happy. Soon I will leave earth, . . . but ere that happens, I will do an act—an Act which Christ wishes. If any fruit be gathered and engendered from it, Christ will be happily glad.

I go around on the earth both in the spirit and in the creature's form. I see many hidden acts and deeds of evil perpetrated. I see sin triumphantly and boldly stalking the streets; I see virtue usually mocked and sneered at; I see theft a popular trade; I see meanness and cowardice predominant among the creatures called men; I see lust the pleasure of women; I see Christ's gospel torn into shreds ruthlessly and blatantly by self-styled priests; I see clergymen flinging their flagrant phrases of sectarian dislike despicable—and egregiously at variance with God's Law—at the Roman Church; while the Roman Church—if it would rise in rebellion against the crushing power of Papal tyranny and uproot the evilness thereof, and cease calling their pastors by forbidden titles, thus breaking the commandment, "Call no man your father on earth," it would be reincarnated perhaps to goodness. Then let the priests—the true, simple, unsophisticated priest, ordained by God—cast away forbidden titles, fixed-up rituals, rich edifices, and sacerdotal hypocrisy, rise up and expand and advise the use of Science, and analyze God's Law,—not drill children into Form, welding them into insipid automatons—to be easily operated by the priests. Now is the time to work the reform! O,

terrible will be the End if the World pursues its downward career! Now, when every church emits the cry, "I know not the Man," when the clergymen are Peters denying Christ, when Society is corrupt to the core, taking its chief delight in bestial sensuality—now is the time to Stop! Will the Saviour return and find that His Life and Death are of no avail? That Ignorance is Ignorance still? That Faith is dead? I, who love Him, who saw Him die, one of His angels in Heaven,—I do speak—speak the truth. Follow Him—that is simple. But the world will not follow Him. O Father of Souls, how many will reach that Perfect Home! How few merit it!—And why is this the frightful state of Man? Whose fault is it?....not Christ's.

EPILOGUE.

“Occultari potest ad tempus veritas, vinci non potest. Florere potest ad tempus iniquitas, permanere non potest——”

ST. AUGUSTINE.

A DARK, stormy winter night—a night in which the faintly discernible snowflakes fell in every varying and changing gust of wind—was over the earth. Only the sound of the mournful dirge of wind-wailing was heard. Dark and somber, cold and strong, like to a dark mediæval prison, intimidating in its black, cold aspect, rose a cathedral, a darker silhouette against the night's darkness. Only the dark, exceedingly dark outlines could be seen. It stood up in cold, assertive, grotesque harshness; along the walk before it stood a row of leafless trees, through which the sharp, biting wind passing, made a drear, solemn moan. Roaring in unfettered fury, the wind blew the driving snow into the small, dark niches, into the faces of the hideous gargoyles, and around the towers. The entrance door of hard oak, iron-bolted, was repelling instead of inviting. Securely locked, no weary, frozen wanderer could possibly enter therein to rest. A woman, garmented in tattered raiment, slowly tottered along, nearly falling. Her face was closely veiled. She slowly, with

seeming difficulty, at length succeeded in reaching the cathedral door. In vain she tried to enter—in vain; it was bolted.

“O God,” she cried, “this is the way they treat the poor;—whereas to fulfill and follow Thy Holy Law, this should be open, so that any weary, sad, and dispirited creature may enter and pray.”

She descended the steps, gazed about her, and muttered in ecstasy:

“Thou, O Love, art here. Thou, O Jesus, art ever with me—THOU GREATEST LOVE.”

She walked out of the recess of the embrasured church door, and trod across the snow-covered pavement—leaving no footsteps in the soft snow. She went to the richly-hewn door of the parsonage,—the bell rang,—and in a very short time a neatly dressed servant answered the summons.

“I wish to see McKalb,” said this mysterious woman.

“Who?” exclaimed the girl, questioningly and suspiciously.

“The priest who lives here,” responded the woman.

“Ah,” said the girl, darkly, “Father McKalb! He is not at home.”

“He is,” said the woman, positively, and with assertive surety.

“Huh?” interrogated the gaping girl.

“He is in....and I shall see him,” she rejoined, composedly.

“Well, now, wait a bit! I’ll see.”

Whereupon she hastily slammed the door shut. The

cold wind blew and moaned a dismal dirge. The white flakes fell fast in thick voluminous gusts. The cold was biting in its severe sharpness.

"Such a night," murmured the woman softly—"on such a comfortless night.... Salvation came."

After several minutes had elapsed the door was thrown open. A slender, well-shaven man stood at the door in a black cassock. His physiognomy was one of expressive egotism and assumed sanctity—yet....there was a trace—faint though it was—of Truth and Purpose and Destiny written there,—but it was nearly eradicated. In his mouth was an odoriferous cigar, from which arose sweetly scented smoke. Taking the Havana from his mouth, he angrily inquired in gruff, hasty tones:

"What do you want?"

"I want shelter," answered the woman steadily, standing in the blinding gushes of snow—"and I want to enter. I am here on this cold world, snow falling and wind blowing;—oh, take me in . . . and fulfill your Master's Law."

He searchingly scrutinized her for several minutes with a curious expression of mingled humor and exasperation. Finally he said:

"Get out;—go to a hut near." And as he was shutting the door a loud voice in sepulchral accents broke on the air,....the wind suddenly ceased,.... several flashes of lightning in livid blue forks flashed,and that strange unneearthly voice cried in pulsating tones:

"They shut the churches,—they shut their houses,—

they honor their Maker with their lips,—of them were said the most true words: *‘This people honoreth Me with their lips, their heart is far from Me. And in vain do they worship Me, teaching doctrines and precepts of men.’* Will Christ of you, vain priests, say at the Last Day when Justice will be manifest: *Come ye blessed of My Father, possess the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and you gave Me to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me to drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in?’* No . . . He will say: *‘Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels: For I was hungry, and you gave Me not to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me not to drink; I was a stranger, and you took Me not in; naked, and you clothed Me not; sick in prison, and you did not visit Me. Amen, I say to you, as long as you did not feed one of these least—(the poor, the prisoner, the dying)—neither did you do it to Me. Depart into everlasting punishment.’* And O Jesus, thus will they be condemned—even the hypocritical priests who ordain to follow Thy Law, and all who do not as they ought.”

Anger convulsed the enraged priest’s smooth face. The servant came rushing to him, looking at him inquiringly.

“A lost wretch—gone astray—let her go,” mumbled the priest, irascibly.

And then . . . moving like wind, the woman, the “lost wretch,” was by him, crying in a loud, reproachful tone:

“Mortal, know you not that Christ said in His mercy, ‘Love your enemies and do good to them that hate you, and pray for the lost? He never left the ‘wretch’ go,—He would save him. He would never cast off the poor, charge dollars for masses—elaborate prayers;—and now listen,—you must, and you shall, that you may see your evil. Christ—the Son of God—on earth, as you will find in the sixth chapter of Matthew, said:

“‘And when ye pray, you shall not be as the hypocrites, that love to stand and pray in the synagogues and corners of the streets that they may be seen by men; Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward.’ Does this substantiate or condemn the elaborate prayers of the Mass—the vainly ostentatious, flaring open display? And further, He says: ‘And when thou shalt pray, enter into thy chamber, and having shut the door, pray to thy Father in secret: and thy Father who seeth in secret, will repay thee. And when you are praying, speak not much, as the heathens. For they think that in their much speaking they may be heard. But be not you therefore like them, for your Father knoweth what is needful for you, before you ask Him. Thus therefore thou shalt pray: Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy Name; Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our super-substantial bread. *And forgive us our debts as we also forgive our debtors.* And lead us not into temptation. But deliver us from evil. Amen.’”

A look of rapt ecstasy was the aspect of the

“wretch,” and half-startled, half-irate, and half amused priest, unmindful of the cold, was absorbed in listening to her fervent discourse. She went on:

“How often is that prayer said in the Roman Church? And instead of teaching secret prayer, you command the laity to come to mass under penalty of mortal sin? You should teach your people to sincerely forgive one another, for unless that is done—*disaster will fall*. And furthermore, you teach doctrines and perform deeds distinctly forbidden by Christ. For instance, the marking of the Cross upon the foreheads of the laity on Ash-Wednesdays;—Jesus hath said: ‘And when you fast, be not as the hypocrites, sad. For they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward.’ O the horrible irreligion of Form!

“And about the Form of Faith;—You drill prayers—hastily said—into young children—Christ’s angels—they become mere, vapid automatons. You blatantly condemn good education. In God’s name, how can any one love the Maker of beauty when that beauty is hidden and obscured? Your one discordant cry is for money,—for to raise edifices and to live a life of luxury. Christ said to His ministers, when He sent them to teach; ‘Behold, I send you as lambs among wolves. Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes, and salute no man by the way. Into whatsoever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace be in this house.’ He did not confer upon you the title of ‘father:’ instead, He said: ‘The Scribes and Pharisees have sitten in the

chair of Moses—(as priests sit in the chair of Peter to-day.) All things therefore what they shall say to you do—(things pertaining to the welfare of the soul),—but according to their works do ye not; for they say and do not. For they bind heavy and insupportable burdens, and lay them on men's shoulders; but with a finger of their own they will not move them. And all the works they do to be seen of men.' As you priests build hospitals, etc., doing specious good, to be seen of men,—to make proselytes. You seldom go secretly among the poor and thus fulfill the Master's Law. He continues: 'For they make their phylacteries broad and enlarge their fringes. And they love the first places at feasts, and the first chairs in the synagogues, and salutations in the market-place, and to be called by men, Rabbi. But be not you called Rabbi. For One is your Master, and all you brethren. And call none your father upon earth, for One is your Father Who is in Heaven. Neither be you called masters; for One is your Master, Christ.' Thus, O Priest, see how you fulfill Christ's Law . . . You, and the jesuitical, crushing power of Rome insatiably grind money from the poor man's hand,—ye take, not give,—ye do not sell half of what you have and give to the poor and follow Him. Love engenders Love. The haughty, overbearing bold assertions of the priests intimidate Love. The sole, fundamental principle of cosmical creations is Love. You are a dissonant sound in the symphony. You do not teach the marvellous and wonderful power of prayer—O wonderful is the power of a simple prayer free from sophistry and guile!—I

was saved by a simple prayer,—while in purging fires I always prayed as all suffering souls do. You teach of the wonderful blessing of the Pope,—of wonderful miracles done. Why have you not power to do these? Did Christ not give all His disciples the power of the Holy Ghost, the power to cast out devils in His Name? Why have you not that power? Simply because you are not His true disciple, and have not His Faith;—you condemn other sects. In the ninth chapter of Luke is recorded the unsectarian Love of Jesus. Thus we find it: ‘And John, answering, said: “Master, we saw a certain man casting out devils in Thy Name, and we forbade Him, because he followeth not us.” And Jesus said to him: “Forbid him not, for he that is not against you is for you.”’ Now it is absurd to say that the Protestant Version of the Scriptures is less the word of God than the Douay Version. Instead of praying for those sects who have by dense reformers fallen into a perhaps darker darkness, you condemn them and commit a sin, and hence merit their antipathy and hate. Allow me to cite another extract from the Book you dislike your people to read, but which you dare not forbid:

“‘And He sent messengers before His face: and going they entered into a city of the Samaritans, to prepare for Him.

“‘And they received Him not, because His face was one going to Jerusalem.

“‘And when His disciples James and John had seen this, they said: “Lord, wilt Thou that we command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?”

“ ‘And turning, He rebuked them, saying: “You know not of what spirit you are.

“ ‘The Son of Man came not to destroy souls, but to save.’

“The Inquisition of Spain and the massacres of France are atrocious blots upon the Roman Church. Christ won love by Love, He did not force it. The Jesuits untiringly slaved for mundane glory;—Christ said: *You cannot serve two masters, you will either love the one or hate the other.* You serve one master—Mammon; to the easily duped world you serve another Master; whereas, you serve not *the* Master;—but you are flagrant, meretricious blasphemers! You are, you know it; I know it. Gaze at me—I am a ‘wretch,’ yet I do tell you what is true, without polish or preparation. When a church has bishops that issue legal proceedings against a priest so as to make him get out of his parish, all because he mercifully attended the dying bed of an excommunicated man,—when the priests openly declare their ‘superiority’ over ‘common’ men, and declare things with assertive obtrusiveness, saying it is their prerogative, which from the mouth of a layman they would most strenuously condemn,—when priests invent schemes and play on the credulity of the faithful for money,—when priests declare nauseous lies, call upon God to bear witness to their lies, when they chase children from the Sunday-school for small offenses, when they expectorate and swear on the altars,—when a church of such priests allows such execrable, dastardly acts to go unreproved,—when a church sets up a mortal and declares him to be a god, able to speak

infallibly, who counts money in leisure hours, who condemns his brethren, and who gives 'blessings' for 'offerings,'—when this wretch of iniquity pardons whom he favors, and to his brethren, whom he dislikes, says: 'Let him be anathema,'—when this prolocutor of the Devil declares himself to be upheld by God, an oracle of the Holy Ghost,—when all this is done, upheld, and made open—then . . . *the abomination of desolation stands in the holy place!* and, oh, the sheep must needs *watch*. The sheep are not watched by the men-appointed shepherd—him who is said to be the 'Representative of Christ,' but who, to use Moore's words, is:

“ ‘ A wretch who shrines his lusts in heaven,
And makes a pander of his God.’ ”

“ These words of the poet describe the Representative of Peter, the man whose god is Gold—bright, evil-generating, yellow gold. Yes, it is a church of iniquity, papal intrigues, and superstition. You pray to mortals, you condemn Science and Genius, you allow no room for advancement, you make men come to confession and make game of their foibles, berating them, while you are worse sinners than they! You do not go among the poor; you should. Instead of going to the rich and pandering to them, you should follow Christ to the slums, the sick, and the dying. Your faith should give you power to impart joy to the sad, heal the sick, raise the dead, control the elements,—and you should worship Him in

Nature's temple, praise Him, thank Him, tell of Him, and glorify His Name. Simplicity would be a grandeur. The churches and their gilded garniture are worse than the conceived place of hell—incense, candles, statues, ornaments, symbols, all relics of idolatry, breathe not of God; simplicity is ennobling, nature appeals to men. Yes, go to the poor, comfort them—not with formulas of prayers and 'holy oil;' go to the sick, cure them—not with 'holy water' and other symbols; go to the sad, relieve their sorrow, bear their burdens—not with intercession to saints and by giving them 'holy medals.' Discard all gross superstition, accept the simple, clear teaching of Jesus, teaching that Heaven is open to all, that He will forgive without a mortal's permission, that He will speak by the Holy Ghost through men, not one unit. Teach purely, teach conscientiously; and your instinct will lead you aright; God will lead you. Examine all you see and hear: observe the beauty in a flower; the glory sang to God in the song of a bird! Everything of creation will teach you a lesson—a lesson that you may teach others. And progressing in spiritual knowledge, you will lead others into the light of Christ. In all things follow Him, not the derelict 'Representative of Christ,' the successor of Peter! Reprove your brother priests who lie, telling what they don't believe, who lust and sin, who are proud and inordinately haughty! Do this; from the corrupt Roman Church bring forth a Pure Church, a Church for every man, of every creed, of every color. The Roman Church has excellent plans for giving consolation to the laity by superstition,—but

the pure teaching of Christ would—O!—give so very much more. The Roman Church is a money-making stock exchange, the priests investing in stock-shrines and superstitious beliefs. The Protestant Church is growing thus,—money in it is becoming more valued every day;—no wonder a large party of clergymen tried to pass a resolution to charge for services rendered to men; no wonder a clergyman claims that it is not a clergyman's duty to visit the sick. Christ did all His work in love, helped the sick, and in Him there was no hypocrisy; His Love subsisted not on Cash. Priest, I who am nothing to you, do tell you this—will you work? will you lead? will you follow the incarnate God, by precept, example, and work? Will you be poor, and free? Do not be the satellite of a man who says he is the 'representative' of a God, and whose chief delight is in gold: *Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall grow cold*; the love is cold, has been cold—for *iniquity does abound*. Cast from your church the priests who are priests only in name—who are wicked, demoralizing, and corrupt.* Purge your faith in the fire of the Gospel, and heed the warning: *Watch*.

* NOTE.—A correspondent from Rome in the *Chrétien Français*, says that since the accession of Victor Emmanuel II., no less than 176 priests of the Roman Church have been punished by the tribunals for offenses, one-third for various crimes and approbating King Humbert's assassination, the other two-thirds for offenses against public morals. Says Dr. C. A. Robertson: "So degraded, with some exceptions, have the priests become (in Italy), that they are not admitted into society; they have been banished as teachers from public schools. Theological faculties have been discontinued in the

" Priest, hear me—one who knows—who suffered—who loves man. Beware of coming Evil, of imminent Tribulation, of Fire, and Bloodshed! Beware! Beware of the evil days to come, when the sheep shall starve and die amid groans, when the moon will weep for the sad plight of this sphere, when the sun shall burn you, the ungrateful recipients of God's blessings! Disaster will submerge the world; Ruin will devastate the nations; Pestilence will destroy all fairness; Starvation will goad men to hell; Fire will consume the earth—and it will swallow Rome, the abode of crime! Beware! Beware of the vengeance you bring upon yourselves!....Priest, man, save your soul, save the world. Follow the Master, avert the Doom.

" I see you are amazed; you are shivering. You think me a disguised somebody. You partially fear me; you need not. Better fear the things which you do not do! For at the Last Day the Do Not rather than the Do will condemn you. Go in; I'll follow you. Reverend sir, you are interested in me—I in you. Enter. Lead me to your study. You will catch a severe cold if I keep you here."

The priest, somewhat regaining his composure, coughed, gazed distrustfully at the woman, stooped and universities." This state of affairs is bad for Italy; and the hostility against Rome is founded on the ground that " it (the ' Holy Roman Catholic Church ') is a political institution, aiming at the restoration of the Pope's temporal power." " And the people are finding a pure Christianity," says a religious weekly, " inside the pale of other churches "—a purer, not a wholly pure Christianity, inside the pale of more perfect, perhaps, but not perfect churches.

AUTHOR.

picked up his cigar which he had let fall, and which had been extinguished. Then he turned, preceded by the terrified servant, and followed by the "wretch."

"I will hear what this degenerate heretic will invent at the priesthood, what schismatic invectives she will hurl at Holy Mother Church. I'm a fool to hear her,but—she uses the Bible—but what is the Bible compared to *our* Church?"

Somewhat timorously he placed a chair for his visitor when they were in his "study." She stood silent. He in nervous, fidgety restlessness, moved to a table and shakingly lit a match—it went out. He lit another—it also went out, as though blown by a strong breath. With an exasperated imprecation, he thrust the cigar into a silver stand. Silence depressing and dismal reigned save for the monotonous ticking of a huge clock.

The apartment was typically that of a sacerdotal occupant. A large painted picture of the "Mater Dolorosa," and a likeness (an unlikeness) of "Ecce Homo," were upon the richly papered wall. Several mohair chairs of ebony were carelessly standing around on the floor. A niche in the one side of the wall contained a colored bisque gold-crowned statue of the Virgin. And on the top of a huge desk was a large brass crucifix. Before the statue of the Virgin were a vase of carnations and two votive candles; the image of Christ was but faintly discernible in its cobwebbed canopy, in the faint light of the dim lamp. Several morocco-bound books were lying about. There was a fine library there, but it was little used.

The most used books were those “approved of by His Holiness the Pope” or some other dignitary.

Paper, ink, cigars, a small crucifix, a rosary, and other pamphlets and articles were copiously scattered about on his desk.

Everything was lavishly and richly furnished: the carpet of moquet was soft and velvety; the furniture was of expensive make:—the luxuries, cigars, wine, and many other convenient accessories, were there to be had.

Suddenly a vehement voice caused the silent priest to tremble.

“*What is the Bible compared with ‘Holy Mother Church?’*” cried an ardent voice, “The Gospel is the Word of God:—The Church is the word of men. The Bible teaches man how to simply win Heaven! The Church—no doubt with good intention—teaches intricate ways, invariably leading to hell. The work of Christ in this sublime Book of Truth says, in regard to Mercy and Pardon. ‘I say not to thee till seven times seven, but till seventy times seven times.’ The word of man says ‘Let him be Anathema!’

“Ah, the Bible is hard for you. No wonder it is not allowed to be read in subjugated, dusty France and starving Spain and fallen Italy. Ah, you priests with a merciless and iron heel, crush the poor and de-trude them into pitiful ignorance. Look at Mexico, South America, Spain, Italy, France, and Hungary! Look at the debased ignorance, the filth, the barbarism! Why do they not progress? Why is not sunny Italy a universal smile? Why is lusty poverty pre-

dominant? Why is Spain fast retroceding into sanguine barbarism? Why is her power of the seas the least, as it was once the greatest? Why is the irreligious belief in superstitious Form all the faith in God these sad nations have?—To all these questions comes the answer: *The iron heel of the Papal Throne!* Why are England and America the foremost nations on the face of the earth?—Because Rome's fearful power is not in plenipotent rule. God knows the governments of these nations are rotten with mercenary men! but the morality and brain-power of the populations are not compressed and limited. God knows Rome is trying hard enough to sprout and to compass these nations!—an incipient growth is beginning.

“Thus as things are, does the Church of Rome fulfill Christ's ennobling Law? No; the Testament, the Word of the infallible—not Pope—but God, is slighted.* Why? . . . So that Priestcraft may reign with impregnable hauteur and undisputed sway. And it does reign—reigns with a tyrant hand, a blatant blasphemy to Heaven, a flagrant negation of Love. Enter the Churches of To-day, listen to the ser-

* The Author recently attempted to prove to a fervent, staunch, Catholic lady—a friend of his—(may her life be one of holy joy and Heaven her end, where she shall singly see)—by quoting several verses of Scripture, that the priests are unhappily wrong. “You've a Protestant Bible,” she in anger expostulatively said. “I use the Douay Version,” I answered, “and you know that is the one ‘recognized’ by the Church.” Finally, in baffled exasperation, she in fidelity to the “Infallible Church,” said: “The devil with the Bible!”

mons! ! ! Some would cause the blood of a good person to freeze with cold horror.

“ Now, To-day, priests boldly step upon the steps of the altar with souls steeped in sin, a nauseating smell of liquor about them, expectorating on the very floors of the fane! Now—he offers up the spotless Host—repeats the words of a God forgotten,—and gazes with sensual, defiled eyes full of impenitence, towards Heaven. Now—he turns and condemns the poor who cannot pay, shouting for PAY! PAY! Now is it that he carelessly lets souls go astray, changes the Law to suit his desire, scolds in the Confessional, telling the repentant sinner that he is the worst one he ever met!—Now he drowns in sensuality,—in wine;—O God of mine—he fears no righteous fulmination; he knows that unrighteous fulminations are hurled at innocent heads, not at the demoralized satellites of Rome; he should be the one who receives fulminations, not those who have the laudable courage to refute the glaring lies of Rome. The evil priest knows his; he knows he will be shielded. Whereas such as he should be shamed to the world, and instead of growing, perhaps this aberration of good, this cursed thing, would cease! Now—he smiles at the wealthy adulteress, and flatters her! Now—he condemns children in Sunday School, and teaches Form, not Faith. Yet one of your prelates says: ‘ The exalted dignity of the Priest is derived not from the personal merits for which he may be conspicuous, but from the sublime functions he is charged to perform. To the carnal eye, the Priest looks like other men,—but to the eye of

faith, he is exalted above the angels, because he exercises powers not given to angels!'

"Aye, he is charged to perform 'sublime functions;' and it is his simple duty to do so. But does he? And although he performs these, he is in every respect as other men: each man has his mission; each mission leads to the same Heaven. But 'exalted above angels!' What pride—what unchristian pride! But further on he says: 'But should a Priest consider himself greater than other men, because he exercises such authority? Far from it!'* Aye, he should not; *but he does*. He does,—yet he denies it. But his denying it will not squash the evil and the ill repute of it,—no, but like Poe's raven it shall shadow him—to the end of the world, to his existence in hell,—and though he cry, 'Leave no black plume as a token of that lie,' its stern reply as "a demon that is dreaming" will be—'Nevermore.' And then the prelates may lamenting say truthfully, 'He is exalted below the devils, for he exercises powers not given to devils.'

"Man, hear ye me? The world is ready to burn! The wolf in sheep's clothing is devouring the flock, the *abomination of desolation* stands in the holy place;—and who shall say God is not desolate in the Churches? The beds of marriage are defiled,—virginity ceases to exist,—Faith is crumbling to ruins on the shift-sands of Priestcraft and Sectarianism! '*Think ye, will the Son of Man find Faith on earth when He cometh?*'" She swayed as a supple tree in ardent ges-

* From the "Faith of the Fathers," by Cardinal Gibbons, Archbishop of Baltimore, Md.

ticulations. The man gazed at her. His equanimity was solely his again,—for thought he, “She is possessed.” Softening, she went on: “The moths are eating the fabric, the mice are in the house. A radical change must be made, O Priest, a change full of Love and Mercy, Christ its only Ruler, re-beginning a pure Faith free from sophistry, the Holy Gospel of Christ its only reliquary and archive. Such a Faith the world wants. Many would grasp at it. Many are falling away from the Churches of To-day,—for any sensible person realizes that God is not *God* in these places. Rome’s power is decaying, though she is striving hard to regain her former place. She tries not to relax her power. The Pope, ‘the Representative of Peter,’ is an infallible Oracle? To Peter, Christ said: ‘Thou savorest of the things of the flesh.’ The Pope is truly a follower of Peter, only he does not the meritorious works which Peter did. He is not congruous to the Law of Christ,—neither are the priests. It is unfit for a priest to slur the people because of not giving ‘their just dues’ to church collections. Yet many priests berate the people for not giving more than they do to all collections, ranging from missionary collections to seminary collections—seminary collections to make more priests of men. The seminary is the place where good-intentioned men enter, and come out egotistical, haughty, aggressive, and domineering priests. No doubt there are many; very many good priests in the Catholic Church;—these think they do their duty by fulfilling the Law of the Church—poor souls!—they are ignorant. They do

not see with a single eye their reprehensible work;—they see not how deficient are their teachings:—they believe the Church to be infallible, do not doubt it, and consider it a gross sacrilege to even question for an instant the authenticity of truth of the Form. Your Church should teach Science, expand the glories of a God-resplendent Nature—the flowers, the birds, the beasts, the planets, and the stars. The Protestant Church engenders and breeds intellect,—in its arm intellect has grown; and sadly, morality has retrograded.

“ Christ’s teachings were purely taught; but as ages passed, men added laws, till at present, the existing Church has laws—many of which are incompatible with Christ’s Law. These aberrant appendages are rancid,—yet as it is, the Catholic Church is the grandest Form of Faith on earth at present;—in the quarrelsome sects there is little efficacious religion. But the Catholic Church needs a purifying. The trash must be thrown out, and the house carefully and diligently cleaned. Then there must be no arrogant priests, no ‘ Holy Fathers ’ no gold statues of saints and no vain display. Then the priests must not be sordid, godless, mercenary, plotting gormands. Then they must have no temporal supremacy, potential power, and despotical sway over eager, simple, trusting souls. Then their haughty, mercenary sway will not be a repellent silhouette against the resplendent glory of simple Christian Faith. Then they will not, with notorious alacrity, attend, and sit for days by the luxurious couch of the wealthy dying, and let the poor die in neglected grief,

regardless as to how they die, whether good or bad! Then they will not have pretty young girls for house-keepers, or elope with organists. Then will these evil things be done away with,—and, with untiring patience and orthodox exactitude, will Christ's loving, simple Law be taught to all; with fervent zeal will the dying be led to the welcoming Master; and with unbounded love will souls be healed and saved from pain. O Priest, I know what pain is! I—I know. Would to God no other would need know....

“The Church must reform—otherwise it will fall! fall deeper than you imagine. It is falling—falling, assisting others to fall, falling from God,....falling to hell!”

The priest with an angry snarl and an access of courage strode forward threateningly, and in menacing anger cried, his black eyes flashing and blazing fire, his bosom heaving in constrained passion, his fists clenched:

“What right have you to vaticinate the fall of the Church? You ranting beast—animal—why have I listened to you! *What are you!* you speak like a devil! Begone, or Heaven will rain fire on this house.”

“If Heaven wishes to rain fire on this house,” the woman answered composedly, “it would have done so long ago. Worse things have happened here. Remember the night, the lamps turned low,....you and two worthy colleagues were in here. Five bottles of the choicest champagne were on the table. You noiselessly left the room;—it was thirty-five minutes of eleven. You were drunk, toppling in liquor; your

speech, usually so eloquent in delivering mean, stinging invectives and exhortations for cash from the altar, was impaired by hoarseness. Slowly,—slowly . . . you walked through the dark hall, . . . a sensual smile marred your red face. On—on—on! at last you were at the door of the room of the pretty, superstitious Irish maid. You knew she had retired. . . . Several hard bumps resounded through the house—*Do you remember this? . . .*”

His face in terror had grown deathly pale—in pallor like to bleached parchment. His form shook as with ague and seemed to become attenuated and tall. Terror froze him still, like a pallid, staring corpse. The woman raised her slender hand high, and went on, ardently:

“Yes, you remember. ‘Sir, who is there?’ cried the girl. ‘Me,’ you replied hoarsely. ‘Father, do you wish me,’ she asked tremulously. ‘Yes, yes; hurry yourself. I need you,’ you imperatively roared. ‘Wait, wait—’ she faltered. You imperatively commanded her to open the door immediately, not giving her time to make herself presentable. There was a cynical, sensual smile on your evilly contorted face. Slowly the door key was reluctantly turned in fear, quickly you unceremoniously pushed open the door,—entered,—and seized the shrinking girl by her bare arm,—and commandingly whispered, ‘Now you listen to me!’ and you led her to this room. Your maudlin fellow priests glared at you in stupefied amazement. ‘Now,’ you said, ‘we’ll have some fun.’” The priest turned to a deathly pallor and fearfully drew away—further—

further—his throat rattled, but no word did he utter.

“Then,” the “wretch” went on, “you coerced the girl by blasphemous words to drink. She became drunk, and unconsciously to herself, in a dazed state, implicitly obeying a ‘holy priest,’ the poor thing pandered to your passions. Wine flowed,—faces were cut,—blood flowed. Sin was triumphant here where Faith should have been kept sacredly.”

She paused, went close to him. He fearfully retreated, glaring like a madman at her. A luminous vapor seemed to float around in the silent place. Several minutes of terrible silence passed.

“Who—what . . . are—you—you?” faltered the priest, staring aghast in fear at her; slowly, “Won’t you—come—come—to—con—fess—a—a—on?....”

“Me? Come to confession to *you*? ME!....”

And suddenly....a bright, rapt Angel stood where the woman had stood. Her face aglow with dazzling light, it was a marvel of resplendent, marvellous loveliness. A golden Aureole of glory in flashing gold encompassed her....

“A devil,” slowly enunciated the priest. Somewhat relieved, he mechanically grasped a crucifix. Then, at the right side of the Mystic Glory, there shone the four radiant beams of a grand empyreal Cross—a cross of translucent, shimmering, rainbow brilliancy, and an unearthly strain of music began to sound—a low sweetly solemn strain.

“No, no devil,” said the Spirit, “but one who loves Man, one who desires his welfare. I will not harm you;—do not fear me—but fear yourself. Thus do

you priests keep the grand vow of perpetual chastity; thus do you secretly sin. That girl lost her self-respect by you—oh, Man, beware! A fearful Retribution there is for such as you—take care! Chastity is a god—sublime! But you priests are not chaste—many of you seduce girls to sin, make love to married women, and commit all foul crimes. Are you fit to serve Christ as you are? Ah, beware !!! . . . beware of the revenge of souls lost by you—and thousands thus see their doom.

“I am a Spirit of God’s World, a Soul that loved, sinned, and suffered. I love you—as God loves you. I exhort you to repent, to return to God, leave Rome, and follow the Way, the Light and the Truth. Pray for the girls you lead astray—and warn others by your experience. You can atone—wipe away your crimes,—do it. For the immorality that you revelled in, the negligence of your life, atone by work; for your pride, live in humility,—and in all things do as He would do. Terrible and egregious are the priestly crimes carefully concealed. Uproot them; reform your brethren regardless of the censure you will incur upon yourself. Truth will always be downed and made suffer—hence the Death of Christ; Lie will always seem to thrive and grow fat—hence the richness of the Roman Church. Preach to the people of God as a Friend, not as an unapproachable Vagueness. All will then love Him, all will then follow Him—and you, O Priests, will save yourselves, and begin a Church of Truth. Do not start another new sect;—there are too many sects. The creeds of the world are pestilent

species of insects devouring and destroying the wheat. Be you a laborer, and gather the wheat into the barn. Purify the Roman Church—it is the work of you priests—do it—and God will bless you. God will speak through you to men—the Holy Spirit will be upon you. Speak as you feel, with purity, truth, simplicity, without preparation—and your eloquence shall melt the clouds—and men's hearts. Do not teach elaborately of scapulars, shrines, miracles of the Virgin, of the flying House of Loretto, and other vile impostures and inane sacramentals. Preach Simplicity, scientific Truth....

“Teach Truth, preach Truth, pray Truth—Truth that is simple, pure, thankful. And in this Truth you will combat Error—you shall drive it into its lair of darkness, and it shall be afraid to seek prey in the sunlight of your Truth. Oh, Error is ruling the sad world to-day, Error that is base, vile, untrue. The seven-headed monster is roaming the world, the monster of Error, with its seven heads—Sensualism, Superstition, Pride, Love of Gold, Hypocrisy, Untruth and Irreligion. Sensualism is inundating the world,—it is men's only pleasure, women's chief joy; it is regarded as a virtue in the demi-monde and society queen, as a failing in the lost sister of the slums. Yet the poor outcast who earns her bread by pandering to the vices of men—and it is men who make women bad—is more virtuous, stands a better chance of getting to Heaven, than the wealthy adulteress. For necessity goads the one to sin; Depravity and Love of Vice the other. And Necessity's votaries will be pardoned, forasmuch that

it is the wealthy that create the demoralising necessity by not helping the poor. You can controvert this Evil, do it. Tell that he who creates the Cause of Sin will bear the punishment, not the victim. And if the wealthy woman refuses a cry for bread from a starving woman, and that woman to get bread submits to degradation, not she, but the rich creature will suffer for it. This is Justice, Justice that is not heeded To-day.

“Also I exhort you to reform and go and preach *in truth* of Love: first the Love of God, then the soul’s mutual love. Expatiate on the true Marriage: of the marriage of Rebecca and Isaac. It is said in Scripture, ‘*Let the same be the woman whom the Lord hath prepared for my master’s son.*’ He who has the destiny to marry, has a Mate prepared for him. This, then, is the true marriage. Many persons meeting their mate, let earthly desires and lust predominate, and hence a great sin ensues. Use every precaution in your power to guard against this;—it is one of the worst sins. *I know, for I have seen and done: I know the awful penalty.* Few, very few, fulfill this destiny now. Just gaze at disreputable, degenerate society!Meditate!

“The angel Raphael led Isaac to his true mate; and to him said, ‘Hear me, and I will show thee who they are, over whom the devil can prevail. For they who in such manner receive matrimony, as to shut out God from themselves, and from their mind, and to give themselves to their lust, as the horse and the mule, which have not understanding, over them the devil hath power . . .’ Thus do not the people of To-day

marry—for the pleasure of sin and ‘for position?’ Then they tire of each other—the spiritual attraction and contentment being non-existent—and they seek others with whom to sin,—and Infidelity reigns . . . It is a gross blasphemy to think that the least thing is left to casual chance when the *hairs of the head are numbered!*

“I ask you to preach of this, to expand upon this vital theme, and to tell what a great and awful sin impurity is—for by it a good Destiny is swept away, and the soul is left shivering and shamed in dark confusion. ‘Every one,’ saith Saint Paul, ‘hath his proper gift from God; one after this manner, and another after that. As the Lord hath distributed to every one, as God hath called every one, so let him walk’—and thus walking, Heaven is the positive Reward. The idea that man is, of no fault of his own, either predestined for Heaven or Hell is an erroneous error, one which is one of the most reeking blasphemies against the God of Love in Heaven.

“I ask you to repent, to go and to teach—teach as Christ told you to, as depicted in the Gospel,—and fulfill your Destiny.

“Go among the poor,—labor hard,—and never more earn dollars by saying paid prayers. I ask you to look at things with a *single eye*.—But you must repent. Repent, pray, go among the poor, work with untiring patience, indefatigable zeal, unlimited love, and unswerving fortitude; work for Christ, winning a place in the Kingdom of Heaven. Preach, and tell of the great Law of Atonement, to forgive and to ask for-

givenness of our debtors. Go into the open air, into the woods, and, in simple thankful prayer, feed the flocks with the Words of Life. Study what you say,—and in the true words of Christ, a glorious orthodox Church of Universal Christianity shall rise,—the heterodox Church of Rome shall fall—fall into forgotten ruins, be a name for parable; and in its moldering ruins will be given to Heaven a great satisfaction. Would it not be an awful thing if the walls of St. Peter's at the Last Day should volley out in irrepressible accusation the blasphemous and plotting words uttered therein! What if the walls of the churches and 'sacred places' should roar out in volleying, voluble truth the words of sin secretly hidden! Aye, material walls have ears that hold all words! Let the priest think ere he speaks; let you all do likewise. Take warning by the inventor Edison's phonograph. The inventions are not without prognostication. Take care!

“Teach true, fervent, loving faith. Tell how you may all become gods. Heretofore all that was needed of a child was to know the *Pater Noster*, the *Ave Maria*, the *Confiteor*, the *Act of Contrition*, and the *Creed*. And to give utterance to these in lightning rapidity was approved. Man, lately I have been in a church; many were going to the altar to make their 'First Communion.' One in a hundred, I may safely say, thought with expectant joy alone of the coming communion. The majority fixed their dresses and flowers, fooled with the burning candles and uttered hollow prayers. The singing rose as a cloud of black smoke to heaven—a gross blasphemy. The Mass was

a terrible reeking crime on the part of the priest. He uttered his Latin doggerel without thinking of the meaning, in an incorrect pronunciation. This is Form and Dogma. Christ's pity has been one of Love. How many precious souls have been lost, and are being lost, by this revolting work! The work of such bad, aggressive priests is nauseating and damnable.

"You have a Destiny. You have gone astray. Reform and do your duty. You can."

"What—what . . . must I do?" interrogated the priest in a frightened whisper.

"Do as Christ commanded you. Read and teach, not detrude the Word of God. Teach and love. God's word is generative and full of meaning: Christ's Law sufficeth for all. . . . I warn you, I exhort you. I know the awful, indescribable pains of purgatory, of atonement. I know the great power of woman,—how she can save souls, and damn souls. Aided by Satan, she can sway kings, rule empires, and destroy good in souls. *It has been done.* I know the power of man,—how he can edify, teach, and greatly work. Teaching the Law of Christ, he will himself save, saving others—"

The priest had approached this Radiant Apparition, and now he fell on his knees before her.

"Angel-saint," he murmured, "if thou art of heaven—be—my—my—mediator. Pray for me . . . Holy Spirit, pray—Be merciful—"

A roaring wind seemed to pass through the room. And in a stern voice the Spirit said:

"Pray to God,—not to His creatures. *There is but*

one Mediator, Christ. . . . Do as He bids you, and thus follow Him, leading men aright, freeing them from the awful power of sin. O priest, terrible, powerful is the power of unseen wills over material—over men's minds. I once lived on earth, loved, and, in the insufficiency of Religion, fell; by the unrecognized but still-working power of Satan I willingly did vast evil, left God for sin, and was punished. The world is surrounded by unseen beings who work—who are either malign or loving in their influence. Destroy the evil influence of these beings by Faith, and mortals, instead of being aided to sin by the power and thoughts of these, will be aided in good works by holy spirits—and pure Faith will open Heaven on many. For this do I come, for this do I entreat you to destroy the Basilica of Peter, the evil Power of Popes. Do this—follow only Christ—love one another—and . . . till we meet again—*Beyond*”—She pointed above—“may God bless you, and may you repent, for Christ came to save sinners, not the just. Repent and do as Christ bids you, thus saving souls from pain; for *you can if you will*. I exhort you to do so—for I KNOW WHAT IS SPIRITUAL PAIN: I KNOW WHAT IS HEAVEN.”

A fiery Flare dazzlingly seemed to consume the whole apartment in a grand flood of glowing radiance—and in this brilliancy, I disappeared—and was gone. For it was I.

Were a priest to do this: disengage himself from the temporal lust of tyrannizing Rome, and go to preach among both poor and the rich, of every creed and

color, implicitly following the Law of Christ, there then would be that acceptable and edifying "One Faith"—a Faith of simple truth would be the result. And the answer to the question, "When the Son of Man cometh, think ye He shall find Faith?" could be affirmatively answered.

The Roman Church, by its teaching and obviously-seen evil practices not in accordance with the teaching of Christ, proves that it is not a pure, unsophisticated Church; hence Christ not lying, proves that this Church is not His Church:—His Church is in the vast beauty of Nature. His Law is the only Way wherein to travel to Heaven. And this Law is the fruitful tree which shall last,—but *the evil tree shall be cut down and cast into the fire!*

And are not the popes mortal? It Peter *savored of the things of the flesh*, why would it be impossible for his "infallible successors" to do so? If the Pope is infallible, he is infallible in Darkness; for "If thine eye be evil," says Christ, "thy body also will be darksome." Hence on the Last Day may not these words of Christ ring in the popes' ears as a hopelessly condemning tocsin of condemnation?—:

"Call no man your father upon earth, for One is your Father who is in Heaven;"

"Love your enemies and do good to them that hate you;"

"And when ye pray, you shall not be as the hypocrites, that love to stand and pray in the synagogues and corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men;"

“Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth;”

“And why seest thou the mote in thy brother’s eye; and seest not the beam in thine own eye?”

“Condemn not and you shall not be condemned;”

“Why call you Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not the things which I say?”

“Take heed and beware of all covetousness;”

“Sell half thou hast and give it to the poor;”

“And to whomsoever much is given, much is required;”

“Judge not that ye be not judged;”

“For there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed; nor hidden that shalt not be known;”

“For whatsoever things you have spoken in darkness, shall be published in the Light: and that which you have spoken in the ear in the chambers shall be preached on the housetops.”

Aye, and are not those words enough to cause any potentate to tremble and writhe on his throne in fear and apprehension, provided he has the least faith in God! And moreover, to the Pope, the “Infallible Speaking *Ex-Cathedra*,” the “Successor of Peter,” the “Representative of Christ on earth”—must not these words cause him to tremble if he reads them (which is not likely), when he is cognizant of the sacerdotal secrets and sins! Think!—what a tremendous noise would be dinned forth out of the housetops and inanimate chambers of the Palace of the Popes!—what an awful, vengeful cry would not the walls thunder forth in rolling, voluble torrents, telling of massacres planned, men’s lives desired, and incestuous sins care-

fully hidden! Then a rich, true fulmination—a late, just fulmination—would condemn many. What a cry to Heaven would not the blood-stained soil of France and Spain cry out irrepressibly! And to these nations will the word of God to Cain be spoken: “*What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother’s blood crieth to me from the earth.*” Then will the guilty rulers be brought low, their secrets openly revealed. Who will dare to assert that this cannot be? The phonograph proves that sound lodges in material. And what if the voices of sinful, incestuous clergymen should thus be preserved for their judgment!

So will many popes, priests, kings, scribes, and sinners be condemned—by their own words, by fearful transmagorias;—and Sin, irrepressibly, with a black, grim, hideous, sardonic smile, will condemn the sinner. This will be when to all Justice will be made manifest. Neither extenuation nor apology will be of avail:—Truth will rule with an undisputed sway. And Rome will then have fallen in the vocal ashes of condemnation; and so will the dissenting and quarrelling Sects.

* * * * *

“Amen, I say to you, if you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you shall say to this mountain, ‘Remove from hence thither,’ and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible to you.”* So spake the Messiah.

Faith—a grand, potent, sublime thing. Faith makes all things possible,—and Faith can be acquired only

* St. Matthew, xvii. 19.

by work and faith in Christ. Faith opens heaven,—it can move mountains. We have Christ's incontestible words for it. Hence we must believe. The clergyman cannot move a mountain, they laugh at the idea: they have no faith. If a person is inconsistent, he is untrue. This is a warning, an advice. And a parting word: Carefully obey Christ, following the Way, led by the Light, speaking the Truth; Sinner, repent; Priest, reform, atone;—let Darkness roll away, and dissolving into oblivion, let Light replace the Darkness:—*Believe*—believe only Christ. And this being done, the Risen from the Dead, the Incarnate God, the Saviour of the World, the Infant of Love will come in clouds and glory with His angels and find the world ready to receive Him.

Now as I have executed a mission of love, since I give example and tell, since I, an angel of Heaven, have told a truth shall depart. . . .

The sky—expansive, silent—is above me. Huge clouds whose rifted edge shine as masses of gold and silver stand—still. Long ridges of mountains solemnly rear themselves upwards towards heaven . . . Trees down in the vale moan a plaintive song . . . But here—here on the summit of the snow-covered mountain all seems comparatively silent. An occasional cry from a wild animal ascends, then dies slowly, echoing away. The dull sound of a roaring cascade can be faintly heard,—yet all seems still. No mortal man treads these sacred hills, no human hand desecrates and alters the sublime works of Na-

ture. The snow sparkles in the sunlight, . . . green plants creep forth to gaze at the sun, . . . a few trees wave their branches, and a scent of pine pervades the air. Spirits are here, . . . souls may here find rest, . . . a whisper is borne over the mountain and on—a wind containing the wail of souls in hell, the song of souls in joy. . . . The hills undulate and sparkle, . . . the sky is sweetly blue, . . . Nature is grandly sublime.

Here is the snow-capped mountain, a white Altar in the Temple of the World, upon it the spotless cloth of immaculate snow, bearing the sacred Tabernacle of Silence, only now and then opened by Sound—expressive, speakable, pregnant; above hangs the Sun in the heavens—the sanctuary lamp before the Real Presence of God; the midnight stars here burn for midnight prayer—in the undefiled, sacred Temple where Sensualism and Irreligion do not supersede the Grandeur of Purity, the Simplicity of Prayer; above is the limitless, immeasurable dome—the cerulean vault of endless sky; and in it are the Guardian Angels of earthly things—clouds,—ethereal forms bending in devotion, ready to give life to vegetation by a downpour of enlivening rain; below are flowers in the valley, speaking of Love, trees telling of omnipresent Joy—silently speaking worshipers of God. A breath of air sweeps the mountain—a cooling message of the Creator, answering prayers. Every atom is sentient with reverent gladness. Here is a hallowed fane—here souls do rest from pain. The birds may here sing undisturbed; the trees may bow to God not fearing the sneering mock-

ery of men; the falling waters may caress the mountain, and no sin mars the love. Here is heaven on earth, away off in the city is hell. Vast, expansive, grand—O the mighty majesty, the unutterable grandeur of God's sublime creation! . . . All is beauty, sublimity—love. Love consumes the hallowed place—love shown everywhere, love not hindered in its work, not defiled by Sin.

I will rise, and go to God . . . O joy, O happiness of souls! . . . O God is kind, God is good! . . . Let rocks break forth and give Him praise,—let all the earth its anthems raise; His Love flows down to all the earth,—all Mercy—Love in Him have birth. . . .

Hark, . . . the angels call,—beckon,—smile! . . . Up . . . *Away!*—I leave the mundane sphere, ascend among the clouds, rise among sidereal stars, on—upwards . . . past the planet Mars. Music passionately throbs around me, . . . I am in a sea of brilliant light and sweet tunes . . . Higher, . . . up. I pass bright Sirius. The world recedes, the distant spheres near the sun grow dim, . . . a million blazing suns I see. I pass the three Suns of the Pole—what sweet rapture pervades my Soul! Away, . . . high,—higher! through the sky so calm and blue, into heavenly beauties true, past clouds of color, light and form, past orbits where the planets swarm! . . . Higher—to the World of Perfect Love, the World of God, of Beauty, of Fire . . . to the ne'er decreasing, ecstatic, enthralling, transporting bliss of Heaven—*Away!* . . . to empyrean light, music, and joy . . . Let birds pour out their liquid hymns, let Nature

bloom and with rapture tremble, let rocks and streams grand *Hosannas* sing! Let all earth rejoice that God truly lives—lives in a World divine, a World which man can enter, where his sorrows shall cease, his joys increase. Up—up—into the glistening radiance of a million trillion stars;—up—up, a Spirit—an Angel of Love, a Spirit that sinned . . . At last . . . calm, unutterable . . . ecstasy!—peace—light. . . . Beyond,—*O sublime grandeur!* . . . is the splendid . . . rolling . . . majestic World—of Melody, Beauty—God. . . . O wondrous spectacle! O ravishing joy! . . . Into the Fire, into the Sound,—let Heaven with *Hosannas* resound! . . . O Glory to God, to the Messenger Christ—the Redeemer, the Saviour, the *Infant of Love!* . . . Farewell, sad world of sinful men, . . . FARE . . . THEE—WELL....

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APPENDIX.

“ Too many, Lord, abuse Thy grace,
In this licentious day ;
And while they boast they see Thy face,
They turn their own away.”

COWPER.

Now let us pause, think and realize. Let us awaken from our settled state of mediocral uselessness, and do Christ's Law. Why do we live? Of what use is earthly labor? Is Christ's Law hard to fulfill? Are its fruits poor—or abundantly rich? Now, when all the Churches are passing but devastating and virulent miasmata of noxious corruption,—when men sit on the Papal throne vehemently crying for mundane power,—when men enter the White House with crafty, sinister, sycophant smiles, and secretly steal—steal not only money, but the peace of a nation,—when they care naught for the welfare of the citizens who make the nation,—when morality is on the fast ebb,—when the tide of dissentient politics is ruled by base coin,—when men fall away from God, crying “ Show me a God,”—when unpitied poverty is depressed and unhelped,—when the silk-hatted rascals aggressively defraud the laboring miner, molder, or any laborer,—when the high art of Literature is ruled and degraded by base Cash, the “ successful ” authors being those

who "boldly, daringly" write such indecencies as would make a barn-yard cow blush if she could read them, the "greatest poet of the day" being a depraved wretch who shows his degenerate vileness by calling the God-in-Man a "carrion crucified," and God "the shadow called God," and who is praised for showing his impure love of sensuality by daring to "paint the beauty of the flesh in words," the great authors being those who, like De Maupassant and others of his ilk, degrade purity, advocate "free love," write "sexual problems," thus corrupting the minds of the young,—when Christ's "ministers" are too inert to discourage and condemn this demoralizing trash, and when they are the secret lovers of society women,—when the men of society are weaklings whose only joy is Gratification,—when the powdered ladies are continually drunk and enjoying immund revels,—when priests associate with these serpents, and cry for "Gold,"—when the breweries are flourishing and flowing—when the nation, aye, the whole world, is rushing in frenzy to the end—while all this is occurring, would it not be well to think? to act? . . . For what do we labor? for what do we raise churches? for what do we raise a nation? For what but the progress of morality! If we work for ephemeral earthly glory, our work is in vain. Why work for perishable matter?

Gaze at the nation shining in its luster of corruption and sin; gaze at the streets and see the amorous juvenile sinners. Gaze at the clergymen—are not some of them repulsive negations of good? Gaze at the senator, governor, or statesman—Does he unselfishly hold

this position for the welfare of others?—*or for himself?* Gaze at the children;—one can barely find an innocent child above the age of five.

Fast—fast—the nation is falling:—Rome's sway is powerful; Sectarianism, like the restless waves of an uncertain sea, rises and falls in error and bigotry; conjugal infidelity is a most fashionable and popular crime; wickedness is jokingly winked at; the apotheosis of the clergymen is accepted; priests cry for gold;—Money is god,—Wall Street is paradise——

Is it not a wonder that the barbarous yet faithful aboriginal inhabitant of this land, the redman, does not rise from his forgotten grave and cry:

“Why do you fall lower than I, when I, mine, and all were sacrificed to you? In my untutored savagery I dreamt of no such immorality as you practice and bombastically boast of!”

In what a state will the Son of Man find this nation when He cometh? . . .

Oh, let us rise. Let us conquer the Tyranny of Rome, partisan Imperialism, and apotheosized Gold. Let undiscovered Genius bud out and grow. Let the Constitution and the Gospel reign. Let the mammonized churches fall into forgotten oblivion,—let the breweries crumble into ruin,—let the bestial husband, who maltreats his wife, be castigated till his blood flows,—let the degenerate, unfaithful wife be openly whipped and be a thing to be pitied, not smiled at,—let evil tremble, and Good rise, a glorious morning! Then Religion, Science, and the Promise of the Immortal Hereafter shall be a Goddess of Liberty. And

Liberty will reign, Liberty free from Mammon, Imperialism, and Rome—Liberty in which the Infant of Love will be poorly thanked by being obeyed; and this unsophisticated, unostentatious, God-loving Liberty shall be a sure precursor of Life Everlasting. Soon shall we be passed away;—whither will our evil deeds take us? whither will the true Christian go? . . . Of what avail are our evanescent joys, soon passed away? Ere we sin, let us pause, look into the Future—what are several minutes compared with thousands upon thousands of years? . . . Will we suffer in all this vast, vast expanse of time for a moment of delusive joy? No, in our grand Liberty we will rise—rise morally, and, in an opulent power of righteousness, shall be a nation which will be prepared for the Master when He cometh.

AUTHOR.



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